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THE

CRUISE OF THE "HUMMING BIRD;"

OR,

NOTES NEAR HOME.

BY

MARK HUTTON.

60407 1864

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THIS WORK

IS

Dedicated

TO

RALPH BERNAL OSBORNE, Esq., M.P.,

IN THE EARNEST HOPE

THAT HIS PERSEVERING AND DISINTERESTED ENDEAVOURS

TO REMEDY ONE OF THE NATIONAL EVILS

COMMENTED ON IN THESE PAGES

MAY EVENTUALLY BE REWARDED WITH SUCCESS.

"Dimidium facti qui bene cœpit habet."

CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.

THE CLADDAGH—A "WAKING"—FATHER TOM 1

CHAPTER II.

WHY PHIL MAGUIRE WENT WESTWARD 15

CHAPTER III.

PROTESTANT ANATHEMAS—HIGHLANDERS' OPINIONS—TOM MALLEY'S LUGS 52

CHAPTER IV.

FATHER MAGUIRE—OWEN KELLY'S FATE 71

CHAPTER V.

MACKEREL FISHING—THE EAGLE'S NEST—BERTHA'S SORROW 93

CHAPTER VI.

PATSEY'S NON-CONFESSION—THE MISGUIDED MINISTER—ZEAL WITHOUT DISCRETION 111

CHAPTER VII.

A SIGHT OF SEALS—OULD LARRY—DEEP SEA FISHING . . 135

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SACRED REEK—THE WEDDING BREAKFAST—PRIESTLY ASSAULTS 147

CHAPTER IX.

PAGE

FATHER O'DONOVAN—STRONG MEASURES—CUTTING OUT . 165

CHAPTER X.

DEENISH ISLAND—PHILIP GASCOIGNE'S VIEW OF IRISH AFFAIRS 190

CHAPTER XI.

GERVASE MACNAMARA'S STORY 206

CHAPTER XII.

A PATTERN LANDLORD—PHILIP'S THEORIES 238

CHAPTER XIII.

GRACE O'MALLEY—ACHILL ISLAND—THE PIRATES OF INNISKEA 263

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CHURCH UPON THE MOOR—COMING TRIBULATION—AGRARIAN OUTRAGES 273

CHAPTER XV.

DEPARTURE—PHILIP GASCOIGNE'S PHILOSOPHY—KILMAGRASTHA CASTLE 290

CHAPTER XVI.

CYRIL VERNON—"VENGEANCE IS MINE" 305

CHAPTER XVII.

ARRIVAL AT QUEENSTOWN—FATHER O'DONOVAN'S ARREST . 314

CHAPTER XVIII.

RESTITUTION—LAST NOTES—EXEUNT OMNES 327

THE

CRUISE OF THE "HUMMING BIRD;"

OR,

NOTES NEAR HOME.

CHAPTER I.

THE CLADDAGH—A "WAKING"—FATHER TOM.

"CHARITY! In the honour of God, yer Honour! I'm a Claddagh woman, with five small childer—God help 'em, the crathurs! And one lying stritched in the house beyant."

The speaker was one of a group of ragged and wretched-looking women who, in the "Sister Isle," —the which country I was visiting,—were crowding about the entrance of the hotel in which, after landing from a small yacht, which was for the time my nominal home, I had temporarily taken up my quarters.

The house of entertainment (?) was situated in

the centre of a large and singularly unprosperous-looking town; a town which, to my thinking, partook largely of the characteristics of an American city at the early period of its creation, and when that specimen of Anglo-Saxon industry and taste for speculation had but just commenced its trade in dry goods, drugs and chemicals, and fancy goods generally.

And yet for all this resemblance between the American city and the Hibernian town, the latter is a very old creation, and the capital also, as I imagine it should be called, of the westernmost portion of our Queen's dominions. Moreover, if we may believe those interested in its welfare, it possesses many natural advantages; but (pending the period when those bounteous gifts will be utilised) all that in the first instance attracts the traveller's eye is a general appearance of unthrivingness and decay, the which symptoms are exhibited principally in the display of a population which, for bare-faced, bare-limbed, and unblushing mendicancy—for a paraded and traded-on stock of dirt, rags, and idleness, are second to none (and it is saying much) in any Irish town which it has ever been my lot to visit.

It was a cold blowing day in August—this may

sound like an anomaly, but let any one who has spent a summer on this portion of the wild Atlantic shore convict me of exaggeration if he can. It was, then, on a cold, blowing, and withal rainy day in August, that the beggars, noisy and importunate, thronged round the departing Bianconi car, and begged for charity of the travellers seated thereon.

The woman whose words I have quoted, was the most conspicuous amid the group, both for the untiring energy of her supplications, and for the silent tale of starvation and of woe which was traceable in every line of her miserable face. Her only covering was a collection of patched and many-coloured rags held together by a bony hand, which was for ever failing in its attempts, and leaving exposed to view the dirt-brown skinny throat, and the unwomanly-looking chest, which seemed as though it had been exposed from earliest infancy (as indeed was probably the case) to the wild storms and buffetings of the cruel Connaught climate.

"I'm a Claddagh woman, yer Honour. Charity for the poor childer, in the honour of God."

The woman persisted so vehemently in her peculiar form of prayer, that, distracted though I was by the numerous supplicants around me, I could not choose but listen to her. I was, as I have said, surrounded

by those clamorous, hungry Celts,—with boys, half naked, *wriggling* in their rags, for what purpose I abstained from guessing,—and with old, bent patriarchs, wearied pilgrims through a world which had smiled neither on their childhood nor their age. Heavens! how forlorn they looked, and how, alas! degraded! Verily, at that moment I could almost have taken shame to myself that I was dressed in broadcloth, and had dared in my full contentment to complain that Galway bread was scarcely eatable, and that comfort in the hotel was deplorably wanting.

"Where is the Claddagh?" I asked of the clamorous woman, whose cries had at last begun to excite, not only my compassion, but my curiosity.

"This way, yer Honour," exclaimed twenty supplicants, each eager and resolute to earn by their information an anticipated reward. But before I could make up my mind as to the best means of escape from the troublesome throng, a policeman, who had been watching the scene, stepped forward to the rescue.

"Off with ye," he called out authoritatively, but without the slightest ill-humour or violence. "Can't ye lave the jintleman alone? Git out of that, all of ye, will ye now?"

After this powerful intervention in my behalf, the

space around me was soon cleared, and I stood unmolested, with the man in green, in the wide open street which stretches alongside of an enclosed square in front of old Filboy's hotel. I chose that most unclean hostelry for the sake of the associations connected with it, inasmuch as I looked upon it as classic ground, and as rendered venerable by the dirt which an unwashed and unwashing people have allowed to accumulate both within and without its time-honoured walls. Very untempting were its beds, and equally unsavoury the fare which was put before me; but I remembered for my comfort the glorious bygone days when the "bumper fair" was filled there; when shots (none of your pretence and half-and-half affairs) were exchanged across the tables; and when the "Galway Blazers"—God save the mark!—took their claret and their whisky like bold men as they were!

Recalling to mind, I repeat, those bygone days, I turned my attention to the man of order and authority who stood beside me, and confessing mentally that he was in his right place, I accosted him thus:

"I have a curiosity to see the Claddagh; can I do so now?"

"Your Honour can," answered the man, raising

his hand to his cap. "It's but a step, although it's a rough place."

"Will you show me the way?" I asked. And he assenting, we went forward.

Through the main street, in which I noticed a few tolerable-looking shops, we pursued our way till, arriving (after a walk of some fifteen minutes) at the opposite side of the harbour, I was told that we had entered the precincts of the "Claddagh"— a singular locality, in which exist some thousands of human beings who, strange to say, have never mixed with their neighbours on the city side; who marry exclusively amongst their own class and community, and who gain their scanty and precarious livelihood by fishing only.

One house in that curious nest of low-roofed buildings is not larger than another. There are streets upon streets of miserable cabins, straw-thatched, and internally smoke-dried, whilst a sickening odour of dead and decaying fish hangs heavily on the air. The women whom we met were all dark-eyed, and many might have been handsome but for the begriming smoke, the careworn wrinkled brow, and the total absence in their dress of the art of *coquetterie*— that genuinely feminine quality which, as a lenient writer has remarked, is only a *vice* in the old and ugly.

That there is an admixture, in the population of the Claddagh, both of Eastern and Spanish blood, no one who visits the place can, in my opinion, entertain a doubt; and when we reflect that the qualities and habits of the wild nations from which has sprung this Celtic race have never been modified by any amalgamation with the colder blood of the Saxon, we can scarcely wonder that between the characteristics of the Irish and English peasantry there should be so marked and strong a difference.

It was with such reflections passing through my mind, and the prayer of the Claddagh woman still ringing in my ears, that I followed her through the muddy lanes to the hovel where she dwelt.

"This is the house, if it's plazing to your Honour," whined the poor creature, as she stopped at the door of a wretched and ill-smelling cabin. "Sure it's too much trouble your Honour's taking," she added, seeing that I was preparing with stooping head to cross the threshold of her dwelling.

A low keening* sound; that mournful wailing for the dead which, together with many another peculiar habit and characteristic, has always seemed to me as corroborative of their Eastern origin,† broke

* In Celtic *coon*—pronounced *keen*: Anglice, a howl.

† "There be cryes used among the Irish, such as their lamentations at

from the people with fresh vigour when I appeared amongst the group collected in the hovel. It was some time before my eyes grew accustomed to the obscurity (for there was no window, even of the smallest description, in the cabin); but when I could see with anything like distinctness, I witnessed a scene to which only the pencil of a Rembrandt could have done justice.

Huddled together in the wide chimney-place, and crouching over the live embers, from which the to me suffocating smoke was pouring, were about a dozen women, in costumes closely resembling that of the mistress of the house, and resting, if so it may be called, upon their bare and hard-worked heels. They were all, as if with one voice, howling forth their monotonous and depressing *keen*, a performance which was occasionally interrupted by the necessity of taking comforting whiffs at the *dudheens*, which had probably been provided even before the death of the child, whose *waking* was now being

their buryals, which savour greatly of Scythian barbarism, but which also might be used for an argument to prove them Egyptians. For so in Scripture it is mentioned that the Egyptians lamented for the death of Joseph. Others thinke the custome to come from the Spaniards, for that they do immeasureably bewail their dead. But the same is not proper Spanish, but heathenish, being brought hither by the Scythians, or by the Moors that were Africans. For it is the state of all Pagans and Infidels to be intemperate in their waylings for the dead."—SPENCER'S VIEW OF THE STATE OF IRELAND.

celebrated, and whose body lay still uncoffined on a low bedstead, which stood at a short distance from the chimney. There were numerous other children, with dry eyes and wondering faces, standing about, almost in a state of nudity; whilst a man, in a weather-beaten fisherman's dress, rose on my entrance from a low wooden chair, and said with native courtesy—

"Your Honour's welcome."

"Welcome to what?" I asked myself. "To his wretched country, or to his still more wretched home? To a share in his affliction, or to the jovial entertainment of pipes and whisky which he had provided for his friends? Well, it mattered not, for the tone of hospitality and good will was there; and having fully convinced myself that my presence would not be considered an intrusion, I took my place amongst the mourners.

"Poor little thing," I whispered, looking at the small skeleton (for it was scarcely more) which lay near me on the straw-covered stretcher. "Had it been long ill? had you a doctor to attend it; and what was the cause of its death?"

"Sure, yer Honour, it was jist the big cock—bad manners to it—as had it undher the foot, and he sthriking at the child's head, the thief of the world!"

"But, good heavens! you don't mean to say that the cock killed the child?"

"He did not, sir—yer Honour—not to say at onst. But he had the stringth aiqual to a person—saving your prisince: and the child he took bad afther; and the spot on his head didn't hale at all at all, yer Honour. Biddy, show the jintleman's honour the spot on Tommeen's head. Ye won't now?" And the mother (for it was she who was the spokeswoman) was advancing with a threatening show of enforcing obedience, when a loud fluttering as of wings and many feathers, and a *chuckle*, *chuckle*, *chuckle*, as of domestic fowls innumerable, caused me to look upwards in the direction from which the unwonted sounds proceeded.

And there, sure enough, was the big cock himself,—no less a potentate,—surrounded by his vociferous harem, in which a revolt was apparently in progress, for some of the excited ladies descended, in their wild excitement, upon the heads of the funeral guests, while others perched upon the sleeping calf, which was reposing peacefully in one corner of the cabin.

There was something horribly ludicrous in the scene, and in the strutting audacity with which the homicidal animal, from the rafter—which was evi-

dently the accustomed resting-place of himself and his wives—looked down upon his unconscious victim.

"And you didn't kill the bird?" I asked, annoyed at this fresh instance of Irish connivance with crime.

"Sorra a bit," answered the father. "What for should we be killing him, the crathur?"

I asked no more questions, but hastened to present my small offering, consisting of two half-crowns; the which coins were, with a perfect storm of acclamations, placed at once upon the livid eyelids of the tiny corpse, in lieu of the *pence*, by which humbler coins they had previously been compressed.

As I was preparing to escape from a scene which, I confess, not a little shocked me, and from demonstrations of gratitude too servile to be agreeable, there was a shout outside the hovel of—

"Here's Father Tom! Good *look* to him!" And in another moment the parish priest, a kindly-looking and rather robust old man, entered the room, with head uncovered, and making, with all due reverence, the sign of the Cross.

I looked in his face as he uttered a few sympathising words to the *mourning* parents, and thought that I had rarely seen a better, or a truer counte-

nance. But when—and this occurred only a few minutes after his arrival—he caught sight of the Saxon stranger, so sudden a revulsion took place in his entire aspect, that I could scarcely believe him to be the same man.

In the place of cheerfulness there was lowering gloom, and where there had been an appearance of open frankness I noticed in every lineament a look of hatred and suspicion. My first sight of Father Tom had inspired me with a wish to be better acquainted with him; but my second caused me to hurry from his presence, with a conviction that both I and the race from which I sprang were hateful in his sight.

"And what," I asked myself, as I walked musingly towards my inn, "what was the cause of that portentous cloud which so suddenly overshadowed the rubicund countenance of the Roman Catholic priest?" In my many wanderings through other lands, where the creeds were different from my own, I had met no such warnings of hostility; whilst near to home, and amongst those who speak the language of my forefathers, and live under the rule of the same government, I find that my appearance is as a signal that the armour of conflict should be put on.

The conviction was a painful one, and gave me food for thought during my solitary evening in that comfortless Connaught hostelry.

It had been my purpose to leave Galway on the following day, but the morning was ushered in by a gale of wind, accompanied with such unremitting and fiercely driving rain, that it was impossible for any but the most determined and completely weather-proof adventurer to trust his person on the outside of that most uncomfortable of vehicles, namely, an Irish car. I wandered about the town, however, wrapped in the thickest and most impenetrable of "Cordings;" and it being Sunday, I ventured into the church denominated that of St. Nicholas, and listened to Father Tom's *discoorse*.

And a very good *discoorse* it was, although somewhat over-comforting methought, and tending to increase the influence of the priest over his flock, inasmuch as it led the congregation to believe that in the hands of their spiritual directors are the issues of life and death. Saving this peculiarity—one, however, which is by no means confined to the portly Father Tom—there was nothing particularly to be remarked upon, if I except the unpleasant odour of damp walls, which, together with that of stale incense, and the pungent peat smell arising from

the moist garments of the congregation, produced a pot-pourri of perfumes anything but agreeable.

For the space of more than eight-and-forty hours was I weather-bound in that emporium of dirt, bad living, noise, and whisky-drinking yclept Filboy's Hotel. But I did not regret my temporary imprisonment, inasmuch as it brought me acquainted with a pleasant Anglo-Celt, who, partly for piscatorial, and partly for business purposes, had been for more than two years a resident in the West. From him I learnt many amusing anecdotes of the country people, with whom he had evidently associated on terms of tolerable intimacy; and among other characteristic stories related by him concerning them, there was one which, from the kind of romance attending it, particularly attracted my attention.

I hardly know whether or not I may venture to assert that the adventure, which in the next chapter I shall give as nearly as possible in the relator's own words, is entirely true; but that it is *founded* on fact, I have Mr. Sullivan's own authority for declaring.

CHAPTER II.

WHY PHIL MAGUIRE WENT WESTWARD.

"WELL! Mrs. Flannagan, and how about your friend Father Flannery?"

"Deed, your Honour, it's little I'd be seeing him the time past. I'm thinking it's undher the salt wather he is."

"Under the salt water! Father Flannery drowned! Never!"

"Is it drowned, your Honour?"

"Yes; didn't you say he was under the salt water?"

"It's at Louisberg he is, your Honour."

"Oh! I understand; taking the sea-baths."

"He is, your Honour."

"And so, till Father Flannery gives leave, your children will have no schooling?"

"That's it, your Honour. I wouldn't like to go agin his Riv'rence; and I did hear as much that the clergy would be saying the childer of the neighbours

might be let go to the Church of England schools, but they wouldn't allow the joompers anyway; seeing that they do be speaking awful agin the Virgin Mary, and making the childer read the Bible, and go agin the clergy."

"But, my good woman, you never made these objections till you had secured all the good new clothes for your children. I remember that you were all for sending them to school when you were promised frocks and petticoats to send them in."

"Is it the petticoats, your Honour?"

I looked into her face, and saw cunning in every line of it. She was a small spare woman, with an unwashed wrinkled face, and (though her youngest child was an infant yet unweaned) the meshes of hair which escaped from under her cap were thickly mingled with grey. Her small thatched hovel was built in a hollow beneath the road, rearing its modest grass-grown head at the distance of about a hundred yards from the spot where we stood, and conveying in its architectural simplicity no very exalted idea of the boasted improvement in the dwellings of the Irish peasantry.

She was a hard-working woman, who had been chosen as the partner of his cares by a club-footed cripple; an honest harmless creature, who, in process

of time, had made her the mother of a "long wake family." Shock-headed, turf-dried little animals they were, utterly untutored; and deplorably ignorant of the blessings of soap and water. Behind the hovel was the "little lock of pratees" with its narrow, unsightly "lazy beds" looking anything but green, and smelling ominously of the dread *disease* which was already beginning to show its premonitory symptoms. One wind-tossed thorn-tree whose head was bent resolutely N.N.E., stood near the cabin, and under it the goat and cow that gave the "sup o' milk" to the family, sheltered their projecting bones, and weather-beaten ragged hides.

It was indeed a melancholy picture, and most melancholy of all was the mother's cunning face as she peered curiously into mine. At another time I might have reasoned with the woman, but being in haste I contented myself with a polite inquiry after the health of the absent *Pether*, and prepared to pursue my journey.

"Sure it's to the Holy Well he's gone, yer Honour! Saving your prisance, he's had a great pain in his heart this long while, and was three days lying, and taking nothing at all."

"Poor fellow! Well, I'll see him on the road,

and Father Flannery too, please God. And now good-bye to you."

"Good-bye to yer Honour—and send you safe home."

And with that "God speed" we parted.

I was mounted on a rough looking, but sure-footed Connemara pony, an animal accustomed from its infancy to carry double, and to whom the use of oats as an edible vegetable was almost unknown. Under these circumstances the pace at which I travelled was not, as may be inferred, a rapid one; and I had therefore ample leisure to satiate my eyes with the beauty of the scenery in the midst of which I was journeying. It was a nearly treeless country through which my road lay, and the valley traversed by it through its length was edged on both sides (and also at its *apparent* extremities) by precipitous and somewhat barren looking mountains. Along the lower portions of those mountains remains of former cultivation might be traced; a greener hue was there perceptible, in small and isolated patches; and near to those once well-tilled fields, heaps of stone, and here and there the remains of a pointed gable wall told their tale of the advent of the Saxon, for whose behoof those peasant homes had been made roofless.

High up, and higher still, towards the corrugated line where the low clouds touched the mountain summits, the steep acclivities were dotted with purple heather, and lined down their rugged faces with many a watery furrow.

It was as lovely a day as a wanderer among mountain wilds could wish for. No glaring sun mocked with his broad shining face the dark desolation that dwelt in the deep hollows, where warmth and light found no place to enter; but ever and anon a bright gleam shone out from behind a cloud of down-like lightness, and then, as though with one accord, the green slopes smiled out into a more vivid colouring, and tipped with a sunny radiance, the towering summits of the dark grey rocks assumed a clothing of less sombre hue.

My road lay along the shores of lakes, and by the brink of a narrow but most rapid river. There were no signs of human life around me, and it was only by the occasional cry of a wild bird, the scream of a curlew, or the flapping of a heron's wings as he rose slowly from the river's brink, that the almost solemn stillness of the scene was momentarily broken. Far away, towards heaven's gate, an eagle soared and hovered, floating a thousand feet above the pigmy prey on which, while the unconscious

small bird nestled in the heather, his piercing eye was fixed. I watched him as he swooped to seize his victim, but ere his talons touched the earth a rock hid him from my view, and passing onward I saw the Arab of the air no more.

After a ride of some four miles I emerged upon what is called by the natives a *public* road, and truly enough upon *it* I began to see some proof that in these distant regions the race of man is not altogether extinct. It was the anniversary of a distinguished saint, and moreover the day on which is held the great *Pathern*, or Fair of Murrisk. Every one who knows anything of the highlands of beautiful Connaught has seen, or a tleast heard of, the far-famed mountain, the almost sacred *Reek*, from the highest peak of which St. Patrick did, by "bell and book and candle," curse the reptiles of the land, bidding them "go out o' that" for ever and for aye. At the foot of that famous mountain lies the townland (as it is called) of *Murrisk*. Within its precincts the *Pathern* is held, and during its continuance there rises round the side of old Croagh Patrick many a sound of noisy merriment, shouts of drunken revelry, and violent faction fights.

During the month of August it has for ages been a custom among the peasantry to go through a

course of religious observances, the penances imposed during the period being all the while strangely mixed up with the fun and frolic, the whisky drinking and barbarous "batings" which have for centuries past formed the combined elements of Hibernian gatherings. Far up the mountain side might be seen crawling forms bare-kneed and bleeding, for while the rough stones chafe their limbs they count the beads of their rosaries, and with many a muttered Ave, hope, and believe (for "sure the priest has said it") that through the penance performed the score chalked against them may be washed out, and that, "by the blessing of God," they may be permitted to run up another reckoning.

But of all the sacred shrines to which during the merry August month are bent the steps of the pious mountaineers, that of Our Lady at the Holy Well of Kilgeeva is the most renowned, and in its miraculous powers the most effective.

"Sure it was there that the English jintleman from the airmy took the holy fish that has lived in the well evermore; and bedad! the fish—long life to him—got out of the frying-pan, and threw a *lep*, so he did, right fornenst the jintleman, and the wife that was along wid 'im: and the two of them was dead and waked within the year, Bad cess to 'em!

And the fish he got back to the well—by the blessing of God—as he did."

This, and many another record of miraculous interference is told concerning that wonderful spot; and, as may be supposed, numerous are the votaries that journey towards it, in the full belief and expectation that they will there not only receive pardon for their sins, but will be healed of all their bodily infirmities.

As I proceeded on my way, I soon found myself among small parties of the country people, all of whom were on their way, either to the Pathern or to the Well. Men and women—boys and girls—pilgrims on foot and pilgrims on horseback, all the heads turned one way, and that way was due west towards the fair.

On sped the merry groups—the women and girls clothed in their bright red petticoats and snow white kerchiefs, while the men, in decided opposition to the picturesque, had donned their best frieze suits, tall hats, and extensive shirt collars. On they went along the silent valley, beneath the everlasting hills, and side by side with the rapid river: and so journeying they came at last to the rocky ford, where the mountain stream runs narrowest. It was a pretty sight that river crossing! and only

that among the jocund company men were found, made of such stern and unchivalrous stuff that they made use of the softer sex for the purpose of conveying their masculine bulk across the water, my feelings of admiration for all I saw would have been unmixed. Remonstrance against the unsightly deed would have been as vain as any display of Quixotic feeling was uncalled for, as the barefooted girls, laughing merrily, lent themselves willingly to the work, and, after carrying their unscrupulous friends safely over the slippery stones, let them down far too easily (as I thought) on the other side.

This ford passed, the character of the road changed, for instead of representing with tolerable accuracy a well-kept carriage-way, it merged into a narrow rocky footpath, hewn out of the steep mountain side. The path itself was strewed in many places with loose stones washed by the rains; miniature precipices hung threateningly over the lake, and it was only by daylight, and to feet well accustomed to such tracks that the way could be considered as altogether free from danger.

I was not the only equestrian of the party I had joined, for close beside me rode a man of whom I had often heard as the hero of many a daring deed and desperate faction fight. He was a fine-looking

fellow, six feet at least in height, broad-shouldered and muscular. Add to these advantages, handsome features, a profusion of somewhat reddish hair, with a goodly growth of whisker, and Phil Maguire is before you.

The father of this stalwart individual was a very small farmer, but a "snoog" man withal. He was a widower, his wife having died in childbed, leaving him with his share of the national grievance, viz., the "long wake family," to whom the "big brother" Phil became from that day forth both brother and mother too—so tender was he, and careful of the little beings by whom the small cottage was filled to overflowing. He was a good workman, and could "turn his hand" to anything. His wages, too, were high, whether he earned them in the coast craft as harpooner, or as blaster in the stone-quarries. But the money thus gained was often spent recklessly enough, for it was not in Phil's nature to be saving, even for the little brothers and sisters whom he loved.

A good-natured fellow, and generally popular was that careless and somewhat graceless Philip, often sharing his meal of potatoes with the *tramp* who, at the kitchen of the rich man, had been refused the dinner he or she had been "expecting." And

even now, heavy weight as he is, and rough as is the way, he is not alone upon his mountain pony, but has taken up behind him no less a burthen than club-footed Peter, the halting husband of my lame acquaintance.

"Yer Honour's welcome," said the cripple, as, holding on vigorously to Philip's double-milled frieze coat, he greeted me from the crupper of the much-put-upon animal.

"What's the matter, Peter?" said I, in acknowledgment of the civility. "Your wife says you are expecting a miracle at the Holy Well."

"'Deed I am not, yer Honour; but it's a sore pain I have about the heart any way. The neighbours do be saying as it's the yaller male as is in it, and sorra a bottle I took done me good afther."

"And how about the potatoes?" I asked, willing to change the subject, and rather shrinking from a catalogue of the ills to which Peter's flesh was heir.

The question was answered by Philip, who, after touching his hat respectfully, proceeded to give his opinion on a matter so vitally interesting to his class and countrymen.

"Bad, yer Honour—the worst since '47, and the

turf desthroyed out of the face. It's murthering times intirely."

"Ah, now, Phil, sure the herrings do be coming in. The harvest herrings 'ill be in, surely."

"Divil a one o' them," said Philip, despondingly; cutting short, ruthlessly, the soothing prognostications of the man at his back. "The times is gone to the bad intirely, and, let alone a pretty girl or two, deuce a one of me cares how soon I lave the ould counthry afther me."

"Now, Phil dear, sure that's all along of the herrings," said a bright-looking young maiden, looking archly up at him from under her many-coloured plaid. "It's jist the herrings; but Pat Hallinan, he tould me betther, for, says he, they do be serenading the time past in the bay o' nights."

"Serenading?" I exclaimed, puzzled by the novel application of the word. "Oh! I see—playing outside."

"It's not playing they are at all, your Honour," said Phil, coming to the rescue of his fair friend. "It's just standing up agin the wind she manes, but it's little the likes of her knows afther."

Again, for I was in no humour for a discussion of the wrongs and misfortunes of the country, I turned the conversation into another channel. There is

one subject that in Ireland, as elsewhere, is an almost inexhaustible one, and that one is *horses*, their merits, their capabilities, and, above all, their prices. Impressed with the truth of this remark, I, without any unnecessary circumlocution, bestowed a rather unwarrantable amount of commendation on the animal which bore the weight of the burly Philip.

"A strong, useful mare," I said; "just the animal to carry a man and a half without feeling it."

"Sure it's not trusting to a man and a half it is at all, yer Honour," interposed the dark-haired girl who trudged so closely by the side of the well-laden pony; "it's Philip's the weight of two men any day."

"Aisy now, agra, and don't be hoombugging," said Phil, while a conciliatory glance at the maiden, and the slightest of taps on her small fingers with his stout *shillelagh*, showed her that he spoke in jest.

"It's a good poor man's baste, surely, yer Honour," continued he, as the girl, after drawing the kerchief forward on her brow, fell back among the pedestrians; "a good mare as there is in the three counties, and she's got a foal, three years old this grass, as is as good as hersel', good look to her."

"Could I see her," I asked, for I was in want of a strong riding cob, and the stock seemed promising.

"You can, yer Honour; she's at home at my father's place."

"Oh, it's a mare is it?" I inquired, somewhat disappointed at this apparently unequivocal revelation of the sex of the youthful animal."

"She is not, yer Honour; she's a horse, and a great little animal entirely."

At this point of the conversation our discourse was interrupted by the distant view of a crowd of persons, who, coming towards us at a rapid rate, were making the echoes ring with their shouts and joyous exclamations. On they came with a rush and a push, with barebacked ponies carrying their double freight, while, a little ahead of the main body, a red-faced, self-satisfied looking *boy*, bore triumphantly behind him on a pillion the very prettiest peasant damsel my eyes had ever rested on.

I turned to question Maguire as to what I saw,—for in the arrangement, as well as in the proceedings of the party, there was evidently something unusual,—and I was surprised at the expression of concentrated hate and rage visible on his countenance.

"The everlasting shcoundrel," he muttered between his closed teeth. "God's curse on him; and

he to be bringing the girl before my face this way!" and with a blow on his pony's flank that made the animal spring forward with a bound, and sent "lame Pether" flying into the bog, Phil darted towards the object of his wrath.

But if the young man's blood was up, and his cheek was flushed with passion at the sight of his enemy afar off, one glance at the pale maiden who rode behind his foe was sufficient to send back the crimson current to his heart, and blanch his cheek to a marble paleness. Very near to him passed the pair, but the merry clamour of those that followed them was hushed; and as they filed by the now crushed and silent Philip, each man turned aside his head, and the young girl who walked beside him looked on the strong man pityingly.

"What is all this about?" was my low-toned query, addressed to the hapless Peter, who, after picking himself out of the swamp, was ruefully endeavouring to restore his holiday garments to their pristine elegance.

"Sure it's the dragging home, yer Honour."

"And what may that be?"

"Bedad! and it's just the wife that the boy do be taking to his own place. The neighbours said as how she had an eye to Philip hissel; but he that's

got her—that's Thady Flaherty, yer Honour—he, and the likes of him did be letting on to Winny—that's Winny Foresthal, yer Honour—that Phil was gwine to joomp—that is, to lave the chapel, yer Honour—along of his sending his small little brother to the Ministher's school; and old Tom Foresthal—that's Winny's father—was mad agin him entirely: and so it was, yer Honour, that amongst them they made it up with Thady Flaherty, and it's the dragging home it is the day."

After this explanation, I looked again at the face of the disappointed lover, and there perceived a most melancholy illustration of the story I had been listening to.

The sudden paleness and the agitated tremor of the lip had given place to a rigid fixedness of expression that boded little good to his triumphant rival. I did not address the man again, but, watching all that passed narrowly, I saw that the young girl with the elastic step and shrouded features had again crept closely to his side, and that the small brown hand was once more resting on the tangled mane of the stout cob he rode.

What remains to be told of Philip's story was not made known to me till many a month had passed away—not, in short, till time and various other

causes had almost obliterated from my mind the memory of the little adventure I have been narrating to you.

It was at a wayside inn, on or about the 16th of April following, that, seated at the table in a public room, I chanced to take up and glance over a recent number of the "Hue and Cry." There were several persons present, and among them two members of the police force. Fine soldier-like looking fellows they were, with no traces of whisky-loving on their bronzed faces, but with the keen eye and firmly-set mouth so often characteristic of men of their profession. With the attention of those two officials evidently fixed upon me, I read an advertisement that filled me with dismay. It was as follows:—

"WILFUL MURDER.

"Whereas a verdict of wilful murder has been found against one Philip Maguire, who did, on the — day of August last, beat and kill one Thomas Foresthal, of ——, in the county of ——, this is to give notice that a reward of fifty pounds will be given to any person who shall give such information as will lead to the conviction of the said Philip Maguire," &c., &c.

And then followed a minute and accurate descrip-

tion of the man for whose apprehension the reward was offered.

Now, whether it was owing to a conscious feeling which I may presently explain, I know not, but I certainly experienced some very uncomfortable sensations as I read those words, and felt the eyes of those two men watching me as I did so. After a while, however, curiosity got the better of my consternation, and I addressed the elder of the two thus—

"This is a shocking crime that I have been reading of—this murder, as it is supposed to be, by Philip Maguire. So long ago, too—is the man not taken yet?"

"Taken, sir? Not he! For seven months we have been dodging him, and I believe the devil has a hand in it, or sure we must have got him before this."

"But what was the story, and how did it happen?" I inquired, when, after calling for more punch for the benefit of my green-coated fellow-guests, I prepared to listen to the details I had asked for.

"It was the day of the fair of W——, yer Honour, and a dale of whisky had been dhrunk in the town, but all had gone off pretty quite—just a broken head or two—no harm in life. But next

morning, by the first light, came an account that a murdered man was found in a ditch, a matter of three miles from the town, and that man was old Tom Forestal. It seems that Tom, and a son of his, and his daughter's husband, one Thady Flaherty, was coming home from the fair the worse for dhrink, when who should come upon 'em but Phil and his two brothers, stout boys all of 'em; and they, as was proved, had taken the dhrop, and had a mind to give Thady a bating, 'cause it was he as had given the ill word of Phil to a girl he was courting. It was a dark night, and it came out that the son and the son-in-law made off, like cowardly spalpeens as they were, laving the father all by himsel' to git the bating; and git it he did, sure enough. The two—that is, the young boys—swore to the men, for Philip's brothers were taken next day; and old Tom lived long enough to make oath that it was Phil as strick the blow that killed him: and, sure enough, he was the boy that had the spite, let alone the thick stick, for the other boys had only small little rods along wi' 'em.

"'So the jury brought in a verdict of 'wilful murder' against Philip Maguire; and from that day (though it's known he was within a mile of the town at trial time) sorra a near sight of him have

we had. He just keeps the tops of the mountains, and it's my belief it's the girls (God bless 'em!) as looks to him, for not a hand's turn of work can he get to do any way. But he was evermore a smart boy among the women!"

So for seven long months, through the wet and weary winter, and on the snow-capped mountain peaks, the hunted man had wandered! And on the highest of those lofty summits, while climbing upwards to gaze upon the sun-lit sea, I but the day before had met the proscribed and guilty man!

I hardly knew him when my eye first encountered his, he was so changed, and worn, and haggard. His red, neglected beard fell low upon his chest; while his head, round which was bound a tattered black handkerchief, looked of unusual dimensions under the tangled masses of his thick and unkempt hair.

He stopped when he saw me, and confronted me boldly.

We were nearly at the loftiest point of a mountain that rose from the sea level with singular abruptness. Sheer below us stretched the broad Atlantic, at a distance of some fifteen hundred feet; and near to where we stood was a large projection of dark grey stone, from behind which the wanderer had suddenly emerged.

On seeing me, he, as if mechanically, raised his hand to his head, while, with the courtesy which seems to be among the natural gifts of his countrymen, he addressed me with the greeting that sounds so pleasant in a stranger's ears of—

"Yer Honour's welcome home."

Then, and not till then, a light was held to memory, and I knew who the wild man was.

"Philip Maguire!" I exclaimed. "Is it possible? What has happened to you? I never saw a man so changed!"

"'Deed an' I am changed, yer Honour; and it's the *sorra* has done it. But I wouldn't be throubling yourself with the likes of it. Does yer Honour remember," added he; and then, after a pause, "does yer Honour recollect the black little mare, and the way by the lake side? And sure ye mind Katie, the little girl as walked beside us?"

"Indeed I do, Philip; and a nice little girl she was."

"She's not much for beauty, yer Honour, but she's *good*, that's what she is; and if ever it plase God,—but I disremember—did yer Honour lave the counthry afore the day as——"

"What day, Philip?" I asked, for the man stopped hesitatingly. "I left in August, and have only just returned."

He looked down on the ground thoughtfully.

"Bedad and it's a poor thing for the likes o' me to be spaking to a gintleman this way," and he laughed strangely. "But let alone that, for it's the bitther word yer Honour'll hear tell o' me, and, faix, it's along wi' the rest ye'll be belaving it. Ah! By the Blessed Virgin, but it's over the clifts I could be casting mysel' down into the deep *say*, but for Katie; but sure it's Katie as loves the likes o' me, and I'll just stay for the Colleen's sake. God bless her!"

"But I don't understand. What have you done, Philip? And what *do* people say of you?"

"Yer Honour'll just be axing the first comer, and tales enough'll be tould of Phil Maguire. But," he continued, looking at me fixedly, "ye'll not let on that you saw me the day. It's the police is afther me, and has been this length o' while; but they'll not lay a hoult on me this time, I'm thinking, bad cess to them."

He turned, and left me; and I, musing on what I had heard, and calling to mind the chance rencounter by the dark lake side, began to fear that some serious crime had been committed by the reckless mountaineer. With this impression on my mind, I determined to take an early opportunity of

ascertaining what had actually taken place, and of learning the amount of retribution with which my quondam acquaintance was threatened. This plan I soon put in execution, and the result has been shown in my detailed conversation with the communicative policeman in the parlour of the road-side inn.

A week elapsed, and then, unable to banish from my mind the memory of the miserable fugitive, I resolved to undertake a second expedition to the mountain, in order to seek out and revisit the spot where my interview with Maguire had taken place. I had an irresistible desire to see the man again, for, sinner as he doubtless was, and partly perhaps because he was so great a sinner, I felt a profound compassion stirring in my heart towards him.

It was a delicious morning. A slight easterly haze (the only wind that does not, in these storm-visited regions, bear mist and torrent on its wings) wafted to the senses glad odours of the spring; while the vaulted roof of heaven was blue, and the sea that rippled over the yellow sands below looked green as grass.

By slow degrees, for the way was steep, I ascended the rocky mountain side, resting at intervals on the stones that offered themselves as

halting places, and from my giddy height looking down upon the heathery fringed way, and feeling deeply impressed amidst the desolate grandeur of the scene with the nothingness of the mortals to whom so much is given to achieve and to enjoy.

And so I came at length upon the huge grey rock, against whose surface I had leant when, standing with Phil Maguire by my side, I had listened to his regretful words. It looked silent and sorrowful enough now, that mass of Nature's masonry, with the small-leaved ivy hanging in long festoons over its jagged sides, and with the wild rose and the honeysuckle growing in rich luxuriance about it and around it.

Sadly did I gaze upon the spot—sadly, for it seemed fraught with the memory of that hunted and (as I felt persuaded) repentant man: but as the time wore on, and no sign of him appeared, I began to fear that never from his own lips should I receive the assurance that the crime of which he was found guilty had not been one of premeditation.

But suddenly, and just as my stock of patience was beginning to run short, a rustling noise among the leaves arrested my attention, and in another moment a head emerged from what was evidently an aperture in the stone-work, and that head, it is

almost needless to say, was that of the man I sought.

"Whist, yer Honour," he whispered. "Is no one in it let alone yersel'?"

"No one but me, Philip. I wished to see you again, for I have heard your story, and hope you are not so guilty as people say you are."

"Is it me, yer Honour? Sure I didn't mane to kill the man at all. It was jist a bating I'd a mind to give Thady Flaherty, him as married the girl I loved: and the night was dark, and I'd taken the dhrop, and the *blude* was up, and sorra a one of us tell'd the one man from the other. And so the man was dead; but they found him alive, yer Honour, afore he was kilt: sure it wasn't me as sent the sowl out of him any way."

"God knows," I answered, mournfully, for I was touched with the man's evident contrition,—"God knows, Philip; but it was a cruel deed you did among you to beat so savagely an old man like that —one, too, who had not injured any of you."

"Faix, and he wasn't that old afther all," said Philip, with a vain endeavour to quiet his burthened conscience. "But sure, any way, wasn't he near frind to them as blacken'd me behind my back to the Colleen, and——"

"Don't attempt to excuse it, Philip. The unfortunate man is in his grave, and you helped to send him there: there is no mistake in that, I am afraid."

"No mistake in life, yer Honour. I wish to my Maker there was," and Philip crossed himself devoutly. "And to think he hadn't so much as an hour to *make his sowl*, and sorra a priest to help him to heaven! Oh, Musha! Musha! but it's a sore time I do be having in the nights by mysel', when the lights do be dancing, and the gintlefolks* coming fornenst." And, crouching down at the entrance of the cavern (for such I now perceived that hiding-place to be), the man buried his fingers in his matted hair, shuddering visibly under the influence of those baleful memories.

"And you can declare to me solemnly that it was not your intention to kill the man?" I asked, unwilling to open prematurely a source of hidden consolation that I had in store for him.

"By the blessed Virgin, and by the sowl of my mother, I did not!" exclaimed the man, with sudden and convincing energy; and I, feeling that he did not forswear himself, proceeded to remove (as indeed in part I could) the weight of blood from

* Gentlefolks—*Fairies.*

off the head bent so low in penitence before his God.

"Have you any recollection," was my first question, "on what portion of the ill-fated man's person your blows fell that night?"

"Is it the knocks, yer Honour?"

"I mean, do you remember where you hit him?"

"I do not. It was jist a bating any way."

"Well, Philip," I resumed, after a pause, "I have seen the doctor that opened the body" (here Phil crossed himself, and muttered a *Musha* or two by way of peace offering, as I supposed, to the soul of the departed). "Yes," I continued, after allowing time for the performance of this pious ceremony, "Yes, I saw him yesterday; and he assured me—now, Philip, don't be imagining at once that you have nothing to repent of—he assured me that, on examining the body of the deceased, he found at least a pint of whisky fresh taken in the old man's stomach. After this he went on to say that, considering his age, and hearing that he had had a sort of a fit once before, he considered it to be more than likely that old Tom Forestal didn't die by your hand after all."

Here I came to a pause; and as the man's hands dropped from their hold on his tangled hair, I saw

his face, and could watch the effect of my communication. And I was glad that I could do so, for never shall I forget the expression of radiant joy with which (before the words could come) he thanked me!

At length it was—"Och, thin, the Lord be praised!" and "The blessing of God be on yer Honour's honour!" and such like broken sentences, breaking forth at intervals in bursts of heartfelt gratitude.

After a while he became calmer, and then a hope seemed to dawn upon his mind, that the days of his proscription were at an end, and that the finger of the law would be no longer pointed against him.

"And is it mysel', yer Honour," he asked eagerly, "is it mysel' that's beyant the law this day? And will I be let go home to the ould place, to see my father and the little brothers and sisthers?"

"No hope of that, Philip, I fear; you have still to stand your trial on that terrible charge, and the doctor's private opinion may possibly have but little weight with the jury, when set against the evidence of hard knocks given, and the fact that a bad feeling is known to have existed in your mind towards the deceased. No, it was only by way of some

relief to a conscience weighed down by a sense of guilt, that I imparted those words of comfort to you. There still remains for you deep cause for lasting regret and——"

But here I was interrupted by a cry of alarm from my companion, a cry which was followed by a hasty withdrawal of as much of his person as had been exposed to observation. The movement, though rapid, was cautiously effected; but as he drew his head by a backward movement into the cavern, I was pained and surprised to perceive upon his countenance an expression of keen reproach that was evidently intended for me alone. Hurriedly I glanced around me, and was startled indeed when I discovered, toiling up the mountain path, three figures, which were in my opinion those of disguised police-officers. Within a hundred yards of me they paused, and as I read the terrible words "found at last" on their hot, triumphant brows, I was at once enlightened as to the nature of the suspicion that had flashed through the mind of the fugitive. I was so "taken aback," as the saying is, by the unlooked-for appearance of those at length successful "man-stalkers," that I remained perfectly still, silently contemplating the advance of the men, as with shortened breath they toiled up the few yards

of space that yet intervened between them and the spot on which I stood.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said the foremost of the party, when he was near enough to be heard distinctly. "Beg your pardon, but I must trouble you to stand aside, for Philip Maguire is behind you."

I did not stir an inch. Heaven knows I had no wish to defeat the ends of justice, or to protect a criminal from the punishment due to his offence; but I was, I confess, desirous, nay, eager even, to clear myself in the eyes (or rather through the ears) of Philip, of the odious suspicion to which the appearance of the policemen had laid me open.

I had every reason to suppose that the unfortunate man was within hearing distance, and with that conviction I determined to address a few questions to the leader of the party, in whom I at once recognised the sergeant whose conversation with me regarding the now caged, and all but captured delinquent, I have already narrated to you.

"You have seen him, then?" I asked, adding, as the man seemed preparing to push past me towards the entrance of the cave. "Do not be in such haste, you have him safe enough now; you have the mountain side in view, and he cannot escape you. But for *my* satisfaction, and the gratification of my

curiosity, pray inform me what induced you to seek for Philip Maguire in this place to-day?"

"It was just chance, yer Honour," replied the sergeant, who probably shared my opinion as to the impossibility of another failure. "We were walking the hill, having heard that he was last seen this way, and catching sight of a man, who (saving your presence) was jist yer Honour, we walked up, and there was Philip's head amongst the bushes."

So it was through my means, unwittingly indeed, but not the less surely, that poor Philip, whose fault had already been so heavily expiated, was tracked to earth at last! With a heavy heart, for I saw no means of undoing what I had done, I made way for the men to pass me, and sitting down on a heathery *moss hag*,* I rested my shoulder's against the cavern's side, and almost nervously awaited the re-appearance of the party.

The suspense was not of long duration. Back they came—one by one—each tall form bending low as it passed through the narrow entrance, while on the changed countenances of all there was a blank look of disappointment and consternation; for, wonderful to relate, they returned without their expected prisoner!

* Small elevations on the moorlands resembling mole-hills.

"Stolen away," said I to myself; and I confess (strange as, in the eyes of strict disciplinarians, such an admission may appear) to a feeling of unqualified relief and satisfaction at the thought. Meanwhile the men, with eyes blinking in the dazzling sunlight (into which from the darkness of the cavern they had emerged), told their short and simple story; and simple enough it was, consisting only in this, that on searching the place they had found it empty, and that to all appearance, Phil Maguire had once more escaped out of their hands!

But *where* he had gone, and how he had contrived to elude discovery was now the question; and so intricate did that question seem that, impelled by an invincible curiosity to know the truth, I followed the baffled policemen into the place of refuge, when, once more entering it, they renewed their search after the missing man.

Through the aperture among the rocks we struggled onward, till we found ourselves in a small apartment (if so it may be called) of oblong shape; and so low, that only in one, and that a small portion of it, could a man of Philip's height have stood upright. For a few minutes we looked—or, I should rather say, for the place was very dark—we *felt* our way about us. There seemed to be no

means of egress, save and except the way by which we had entered; but the impossibility of the man's having been spirited away was so evident (except to the superstitious and imaginative minds of his countrymen, who were already beginning to turn pale with ghostly apprehensions) that I resolved to persevere in my investigation.

At length, and after one of the men had removed from the mouth of that singular hiding-place a portion of the obstacles which so effectually prevented the penetration of light, a discovery was made that led to the solution of the mystery. Hidden most ingeniously by stones that seemed as if placed there by Nature's hand, and (as we afterwards ascertained) covered externally by a thick growth of ivy and of heather which appeared as though it might have flourished there, undisturbed by touch of man, for centuries, a still smaller opening was traceable. To clear away all obstructions was to the reviving policemen a work of short duration; but this done, the reward of their labours consisted of nothing more than a return of their astonishment and perturbation.

Along a narrow ledge, so narrow that scarcely the foot of mountain goat could seem to tread it safely, so jutting out it was, and *undermined* and

hanging over. Along that perilous ledge, with many a hundred feet of empty space, straight as a plumb line's fall of sheer descent upon the spreading rocks beneath, the hunted man had trodden!

Creeping on, in snake-like fashion, among the heather, the height of which had concealed him from our view, he must after that fashion have gained the ledge, and there he must have felt indeed as though his life were suspended by a hair! Then it was that the nerves must have been in mercy hardened for the trial; and then, let us hope, that he offered up a prayer for pardon to his God!

A few yards—some twenty, perhaps—of that awful *pass* (and it was there the path was narrowest) were visible from where we had stood; and along that distance he must have walked with form erect, but with a beating heart indeed! Descending next to trace the way that he had trodden, we looked into each other's faces, and read in wondering eyes the question, if mortal man could tread that path and live?

Cautiously did we then approach the edge of the precipice, fully expecting to be horrified by the spectacle of a human form lying lifeless and mangled on the rocks below. No such piteous object, however,

shocked our eyes, as, gazing from the "Robber's Cave,"* we watched the hungry cormorant, as in rapid flight he skimmed along the surface of the sea, and listened to the screaming sea-gulls, as they waited for their prey beneath the water.

But to what place had he betaken himself—that man whose life seemed guarded by a charm? Where had he fled for safety; and with whom could he seek another refuge? The question was soon answered (answered at least in part, and before we had either hoped or expected that the problem would be solved), for glaring in the sun's rays, and rising on the ground swell that rocked it on the radiant sea, a small white sail appeared!

For a moment only had we gazed upon it, when conjecture was converted into certainty, by a sudden exclamation from the sergeant, who, peering through his spy-glass, had taken a hasty survey of the little vessel on which our eyes were fixed.

"By the powers, it's him!" he cried, "as sure as fate it's Phil Maguire! *Long life to him!*"

All involuntarily burst forth that cordial cry of sympathy from the lips of him whose weary task had been to follow through long weeks and months

* The name by which the cave has long been known in the neighbouring districts.

the footsteps of his daring countryman. Perhaps, like me, he pitied him; perhaps, like me, he knew him to be less guilty than he seemed; perhaps—but why attempt to fathom the depths from which that burst of feeling sprung? Suffice it, that in the hearts of those who heard him, the spark of enthusiasm met with an answering flame, and that then and there did we, with the natural sympathy of all men for the brave and daring, send forth upon the silent air a loud and heartfelt cheer. The echoes answered it, and on the receding vessel, doubtless, the shout was heard, for, standing at the helm, the free man waved "Farewell;" and a shrouded figure near him, shook her small hand towards us, as we stood grouped upon the giant mountain's side.

Ere another month had passed away (and the news was told me by the friends he left behind him), the width of the broad Atlantic lay between Phil Maguire and the land of the law he had outraged. Disguised as a beggar-woman, and with his tall form bent forward, so as to personate by means of its dorsal projection the bundle of huge dimensions that is invariably borne on the shoulders of the professional "tramp," the Exile, accompanied by the faithful Katie, found his way to that busy port in England, whence so many of Ireland's children have

embarked in search of other, and more prosperous fortunes. In due time, the ship in which he had taken passage, freighted with her living cargo of eager, hoping emigrants, reached the land of promise, and scarcely had a twelvemonth passed away, when from the *farthest* West news came to home, that Philip and his wife were living in prosperity and content in the land to which they had fled for refuge. It was not long, too, before money for the *ould* and the little folks at home came from the *frinds* who were willing that their exile should be shared by those they had left behind them. So Phil Maguire has those he loved in the Old counthry near to him in the New; whilst still on the wild moor the little hovel raises its decaying thatch above the road side, and still near the one wind-tossed tree the lean cow seeks a shelter from the rain and blast, which are (excepting *themselves*) the worst enemies of this thriftless and *unmendable* people.

CHAPTER III.

PROTESTANT ANATHEMAS—HIGHLANDERS' OPINIONS—TOM MALLEY'S LUGS.

THE following day (it was an early one in August) I arrived at the end of my journey, and took up my quarters with an old friend and not very distant relation, who occupied, for the time being, a small fishing-lodge, beautifully situated at the foot of a mountain which rose almost precipitously from the shores of a trout-filled loch.

Since last I had seen him, Edward Fairholme had married, and his wife, the "Bertha" of these pages, was as pleasant and as cheery a companion as a man could wish for in a mountain solitude. She was a good sailor, too, and fond of the sea, a great desideratum on the present occasion, as Fairholme and I were joint proprietors of a small yacht yclept the "Humming Bird," the which vessel was a pretty cutter of thirty-five tons burthen, the crew of which consisted of but two men and a boy, the "master"

being an Englishman, and the rest natives of the country we were sojourning in.

It was Sunday in that wild Western Land, and we had, about a week after my arrival, landed in our *dingy* on the low rocks which fringe this portion of the coast. We had been cruizing for two days amongst the islands in the bay, and had enjoyed our sail wondrously, for our little vessel had behaved admirably during rather rough and squally weather —weather which caused us greatly to enjoy the change to light winds and fitful gleams of sunshine.

The "Humming Bird" now lay in a sheltered cove amongst the rocks, whilst we, obeying the summons of a single tinkling bell which called us to the House of Prayer (or building raised from the funds of the Church Mission Society), soon found ourselves standing, prayer-books in hand, beside the porch, and waiting for the coming of the minister. The church was of very small dimensions, and of the plainest, or, to speak more correctly, of the ugliest order of architecture. It stood alone at the extremity of a barren moor, there being no ostensible village, and the only houses that had any pretension to be called such, were hidden from our view by a rising ground, round which a humble imi-

tation of a wood had doubtless long been struggling against the severity of the western gales.

From those more imposing tenements (there were but two which differed from the dwellings mentioned in the old surveys as having "only one smoak"), a society emerged whose outward adornment was in striking contrast to that of their (still) Romanist *frinds* around.

As a rule, the converts are greatly addicted to fine clothes; and there was no exception to this amongst the domestic servants, school-teachers, male and female, and the dapper Scripture-readers, who formed almost the entire congregation assembled in that Protestant place of worship.

A few (I think they numbered six) children represented the school, and there were eight souls, including our three selves, who had never bowed the knee to Baal, which, being interpreted, means that they had been "Protestants evermore." The rest of the congregation was composed, as I before mentioned, of the converting staff, and of the family of the officiating clergyman, whilst two or three rather unpromising looking proselytes took their seats on a distant bench, with an air unmistakeably ashamed and sheepish, and looking as though they had not yet become inured to the always loudly-expressed

contempt of their mass-going friends and relations who had not as yet been lured by bribes and promises over the Protestant pale.

The minister, who was a very young, and a necessarily inexperienced man, with the loudest of voices and the broadest of brogues, rated severely the "brands he had plucked from the burning," unjustly, too, I thought; since they committed a "mortal sin," according to their former creed, in entering a Protestant place of worship, and they should, in all justice, have been encouraged accordingly. It seemed also a little hard upon them to dwell so heavily on the awful *fact* that all their friends and relations who had lived and died as "Romanists" were (and that even in cases where their errors had never been pointed out to them) expiating their fatal *mistakes* in the hottest fire of the hottest place for ever!

Heavens! how energetically did that Christian minister shower curses on those erring souls and bodies! What shocking names he gave them, and what awful anathemas did he invoke upon the heads of those misguided beings who dared to lift their eyes to the "vile and odious emblem of the Cross!"

The sermon lasted more than an hour, during the greater part of which period I confess to a feverish

longing to escape from the place poisoned by the breath of man's evil passions, and heated by the wild excess of headstrong zeal.

"Can this be piety?" asked Fairholme, as, with a feeling of indescribable relief, we stood once more beneath the quiet of the sky, inhaling the sweet air of Heaven.

On every side, save where the unfathomable sea spread calm and blue before us, a mountainous waste arose, steep and heather-clothed, with the cattle of a thousand hills grazing on their rugged surface.

We were walking slowly onward, and my friend, after a few minutes' pause, during which I, at least, had been pondering on his question, returned to the subject of the sermon we had been condemned to listen to.

"Is it not terrible to think," he said—and there was a deep and mournful seriousness in his voice—"Is it not terrible to reflect, that in all ages since the world began, a difference in religious faith should have been the most certain means of exciting the evil passions of men, and thus of leading them on to crime?"

"Terrible, indeed," responded Bertha; "and to hear the blessed symbol of our salvation reviled, and

the merciful God in whom we trust held up to these poor people as unjust and cruel, is neither more nor less than blasphemous impiety."

"They err from prejudice and from excess of zeal," remarked Fairholme; "but the evil that they work is none the less potent because some excuse may be found for the doers of it."

"Then," said I, somewhat abruptly, for I was very anxious to learn his opinion on the important subject we had touched upon;—"then you (who have certainly lived long enough in the country to form a correct judgment in the matter) do not approve of the Church Missions in Ireland? You think the movement a mistake?"

"As it is at present conducted, I can answer your question unhesitatingly—though with great regret—in the affirmative; for, in my opinion, the doctrines which are preached, as well as the class of men (though of course with many exceptions) who are employed in the task, are calculated to retard rather than to advance its progress. They seem to forget that it is by patience and by time that the "perfect work" is to be done, and not by coarse invectives, passionate appeals, and threats for which they have in the Book of God no warrant."

"It is very difficult," I remarked, "for people at home in England to learn the truth in such matters; for opinion concerning them is conceived by prejudice and born of religious hatred."

"Fostered, too," said Edward, "uncharitable as this may sound, by the time-servingness, self-seeking, and 'jobbery' which are *at least* as rife in this country as such evils are at home. But we will leave, for the present, the great question of the value of the Mission Society as a religious motive-power, and merely speak of some of the mistakes which have, I think, interfered signally with the success of the object which so many excellently-meaning people have had in view. I have already alluded to the unwise selection of the mission clergymen generally; but for the fact that they are seldom *gentlemen*, and rarely men of enlarged views, who is to blame? This is a question which it is hard to answer; only, for my part, I would mildly suggest to the Mission, that a diminution of the well-paid, well-dressed, and very objectionable staff of Scripture-readers, would leave more of the funds of the Society for the clegyman's pay, who might by this means, while he would then have a little more occupation on his hands, be enabled to *dress* more in accordance with his profession and degree, which in itself would

secure him a higher amount of consideration than he at present enjoys."

"But in what," I asked, "consists your objection to the Scripture-readers, of whose merits we have often heard so much from the advocates in England of this converting society?"

"Principally in this," said Edward; "namely, that while they are what is called *trained* to read the Bible and to expound it to the people, they are in general the very last persons in the world fitted to perform what must be considered in this country as a most *delicate* as well as a difficult duty; for, think you, that in cases where the nicest tact, the most judicious mental management, and a thorough insight into the weaknesses of human nature are qualities indispensable for success, that the blundering efforts of men, young in years, chosen from amongst the poorest classes of the peasantry, and reared in the narrow-minded doctrines of religious fanaticism, can be of any beneficial avail in the work which has been so rashly undertaken, and is being so very inefficiently carried out?"

"And the peasantry in this country," suggested Bertha, "are so very acute in their perceptions, and so given to a blind respect for their superiors in manners and in station! Added to which, as

Edward and I have more than once had opportunities of noticing, the Scripture-readers sent to combat and destroy the people's belief in their comfortable creed are men who have, from unwillingness as lads to work for the benefit of their families, been—I may almost say—*kidnapped* by the missionaries, in order that they may be cited as brands plucked from the burning, and that thus they may become instruments in the conversion (as well-dressed Protestants) of their still ragged relations and friends!"

"But," said I, rather dismayed by the indisputable mass of evidence produced by Fairholme and his wife against an undertaking, which I had been previously led to consider in so different a light, "would you advocate the abandoning the measure because it is ill carried out, and would you——"

"I beg your pardon for interrupting you," said Edward; "but your questions will, I am convinced beforehand, involve the whole question of Church Reform in Ireland, than which no act of the Legislature was ever in any country more imperatively called for, were it only for the relief of our English consciences, inasmuch as by our own misrule we have put the people in the hands of so low a class of priesthood, as are at present the spiritual

directors of the Irish peasantry in this unhappy country!"

While Fairholme was speaking, I could not but be struck by the elevation of his sentiments, and by the serious, speaking beauty of his face. It was some two years since we had met, and since that time my friend Edward had, as I have before said, married; but what was less satisfactory, he had also aged considerably, for though still a young man (he was little more than thirty), there were lines of care upon his face, and his hair was thickly sprinkled with grey. His wife was not handsome, as some men count beauty, but her countenance was full of sense and tenderness, and to Edward she was evidently all in all.

We were standing together (while I made this short survey of my dear friend's looks) on the extreme edge of some steep and abrupt crags, and looking down upon the "slant and winding depths" of the rushing sea. There was but little wind, and that was from the shore, so we—the Saxon strangers—seated ourselves in quiet comfort on the purple heather, and gazed down admiringly upon the white crests of the dark-blue waves.

We had been there but a few minutes, when a man, who, I perceived at a glance, was not an

Irishman, approached our resting-place. He was a fine-looking young fellow, and dressed in the national costume of a Scotch Highlander—was a "Red shank," in short, as the poet Spenser, in his "History of Ireland," unceremoniously denominates the Gallic invaders of the land.

He touched his cap respectfully, and we needed no further encouragement to begin a coversation.

"This is a fine country," was my opening remark, after "good-days" had been exchanged between us and the Celt.

"Weel, it is a fine country jeest," responded the Scotchman, in the slow cautiousness so peculiar to the land of his birth. "It's jeest a fine country, div ye ken how to live in it, whatever."

"Is it difficult to know that?" was my next question.

"Weel, it is, forbye the people, but ye'll never ken what neext they'll be doing. They're but a set of idle loons, wi' their rags and their tatters. But they're getting a sight fewer in the country side, and it's but a wee bittie of money the priest gets frae them noo, I'm thinking, for all the craving they have, whatever."

"Have the priests much influence hereabouts?" inquired Bertha.

"Weel," ejaculated the Highlander, "I dinna ken what's your meaning?"

"I mean, do the poor people obey him? Do they mind what he says, in short?"

"I canna jeest say," replied the Celt, with characteristic prudence. "They wudna leek, may be, to be fleeing in the face of him, but they'd play him a treek the day, I'm theenking, that a mon dawrna do afore, whatever."

"What sort of a trick?" I asked.

"Weel, it wud be abune this ways. The priests, ye ken, hold what they ca' stations abune the country, ganging fra hoose to hoose, and fra ane puir body to anither, hearing their sins, and eating their bit dinners. It's twa days agone that they were cooming this wa', and minding to stop at one Paddy Hogan's in the hoose fornenst ye, where the laird's herd lives; but the mon bethought him, that he'd suner hae the twa puns o' siller in his bit pocket, and the guse on the cabin floor, so he jeest tellt them as 't wa' the landlord's wull they shouldna' coom on the land, and——"

"And so it jeest wa'," put in another and an older Highland Scotchman who, having advanced towards us unperceived, had overheard the latter part of his countryman's statement. "So it jeest

wa'; and I'm theenking it's no *reet* not to let their ain clergy coom amongst them, guin the misguided creatures wish it their nainsels. I ken for sure, that the baillie tellt to Hogan that he'd be sent awa' frae the land guin he had the priests in the hoose. I ken that's true, whatever!"

By this time a small, but evidently inquisitive, crowd had approached to within some fifty yards of us, and among them we could not but notice an individual, whose peculiarity of appearance was at once ludicrous and unpleasant.

He was a man of about forty years of age, whose singularly unprepossessing countenance was impressed with the qualities of cunning, cruelty, and hypocrisy. I formed this idea before I knew his history—a history which, in a few words, I shall narrate to the reader.

Tom Malley (that was his name) chanced, during the "bad times," to be the tenant of a small "holding" in the island of Achill. The details of the miseries endured by the starving Irish during the terrible '47 year, are no secret to those who sympathised so cordially with them in their sufferings, and who generously came to the rescue with English gold and food from English shores. But, amongst the many, and the wondrous examples

of patience which might be recorded of that dreadful period, there were not a few instances of lawless theft and of daring piracy, and amongst these exceptions we must record the case of Tom Malley, the hero of this short narrative.

He was a tolerably well-educated young fellow, was strapping Tom Malley, for his father had been what is called a "snug man," and had given his children the "larning" which all his countrymen are so eager to possess. But as I said before, the bad times arrived; then the rent came due, with no *assets* to meet the call, while hunger gnawed at the vitals of the wretched family, and fever laid them low.

Perhaps of all the districts of the doomed land, none were so heavily visited as that wretched portion of it where Malley lived. A lawless set, almost beyond the pale of the law, and priest-ridden in the extreme, were the inhabitants of Achill, and of the adjacent coast and islands. What wonder, then, that, reckless, starving, and taught by their faith to think little of the sin they meditated, a deed piratical and desperate was planned and put into execution by some of the most adventurous of those heavily-visited creatures?

It chanced one autumn day that a vessel on her

way from Liverpool to the port of Galway, was sighted; the which ship was heavily freighted with food for the hungry Irish.

She was a good-sized craft, manned by a crew of four men and the captain; and she kept on her course steadily, little suspecting the fate that was in store for her.

When nearly opposite a portion of the coast called Blacksod Bay, the wind, which had been before both fresh and fair for them, suddenly fell, and the schooner lay becalmed upon the water. She had not remained long in that position, when a large country boat, crowded with men, half-clothed and with unshorn faces thin and yellow from famine and from fever, came alongside the deck of the schooner, and begged to have speech of the captain. What they said is of little consequence, for the demand was only made in order to divert the attention of the crew, while half-a-dozen boats, loaded like their own with reckless men, came near to the other side of the vessel, the deck of which was a moment later crowded with the starving pirates.

Resistance to some forty men, all armed with the stout shillelagh, without which no Irishman's accoutrement is complete, would have been an act of madness; so the work of depredation was begun

and finished. It lasted for three hours, for many hundred tons of meal had to be turned over to their new owners, but the feat was accomplished at last, and the unlucky schooner (in ballast now) was allowed to pursue her voyage.

We were not informed whether justice ever undertook to prosecute the authors of that daring deed, but if so, it is more than probable that signal failure followed on the attempt to punish the offenders.

One assertion was, however, made by his enemies, but whether truly or otherwise I will not attempt to say; but it was no less a fact than that Tom Malley, the son of the destitute Achill farmer, had been first and foremost in the piratical adventure which had been carried out so boldly and successfully. The story was generally told, and, though possibly without foundation, was as generally believed; and this was a portion of the strange-looking man's *retrospective* history as it was told to us by the communicative Highlander.

"But what," was our very natural query, when he had finished speaking—"what is the reason why that broad black ribbon is bound so carefully about his ears? Did he receive a wound in the affray? or is it only a precaution against the cold?"

The Scotchman smiled grimly—

"It's jeest to hide the place where his lugs were takit frae," he answered.

I was sufficiently conversant with the North British dialect to understand what was meant, and therefore responded in a voice of horror—

"His lugs! Do you mean to say the man has no ears?"

"It's jeest tha'at: for the mission folks got a grip on him, and where he got the piekle meal, and the soup milk, there he bided, till one fine day they made a Scripture Reader of him, as they ca's it, and Tom Malley went out with his Bible to expound to the puir doited creatures round the country."

"But his ears—how did he lose his ears?"

"Jeest as a mon may say from aggravation. He didn't mind the uproar and the whilli-whawing, but went deeving on; read, read, read, and giving his company where they sae muckle as told him it was not wanted. It seems he couldna hold the tongue in his heed, puir body, and for that he was always at the lodge in parritch time. But one day (it's three years agone now) the graceless loons, that were wearying for the tail of his discourse, jeest took his head between their hands, and cut the lugs of it off —whatever."

The story seemed almost too horrible to be true, nor would we believe it, or its scarcely less probable sequel, till by careful investigation we had convinced ourselves of the fact.

The ears of the hapless Scripture Reader had, whilst intruding into a cabin where his presence was unwelcome, been, as the Scotchman had informed us, "crapped of" by the unscrupulous Papists! We could not learn that any attempt had been made to obtain justice against the perpetrators of this cruel outrage; and we may be quite certain that by their own clergy, the sin, if considered in that light at all, was pronounced a very venial transgression.

But it must not be supposed that honest Tom Malley continued on his way without any backslidings from the path which he had entered; for whether it was that the "parritch pot" grew less inviting, or the "soup milk" scarce; or whether, fancying that they had landed him high and dry, his captors were lulled into a fatal security,—certain it is, that Tom, six months after the loss of his "lugs," became again—for a season at least—a Romanist. How often those transformations had been effected we could not ascertain, nor am I qualified to speak confidently of any fact save that he *did* lose his ears in the manner I have described, and that we did see

him—*minus* those appendages—kneeling among the promising converts, his black band round his head, and a good frieze coat upon his back, in the little Mission Church upon the moors.

CHAPTER IV.

FATHER MAGUIRE.—OWEN KELLY'S FATE.

WHEN we had been rather more than a week established in the mountain lodge, which I will designate as "Glanbeg," our small and pleasant party received an unexpected and not very welcome addition in the person of Mr. Oswald Tremlett, an English country gentleman, possessed of a limited landed estate, but of considerable personal importance, according to his own belief, in the county of Devonshire. A narrow-minded individual was this invader of our mountain solitudes—narrow-minded, prejudiced, and essentially *parochial*. But he was Mrs. Fairholme's brother, so we were bound, not only to permit of his encroachment, but to greet him with words of welcome, which *my* conscience at least whispered to me were false.

It was Mr. Tremlett's first introduction to a country which he had from his childhood been accustomed to look upon as the head-quarters of all

that is dangerous, both to individuals, to society, and to the form of religion which, in his narrow-minded bigotry, he believed to be the only one capable of saving a human soul from punishment everlasting.

A solemn, smileless face he had, long and narrow as the prejudices which had grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength; in short, it was scarcely possible to imagine a being so unlike our bright-faced Bertha, as the pale self-concentrated-looking brother who, late on one rainy evening, *dropped* in upon us, to our exceeding great discomfiture.

As might have been expected from this short sketch of our guest, he arrived full of complaints of the inconveniences of the journey, the slowness of the travelling, the wretchedness of the climate, and the importunity of the beggars. And then the food! The miserable poultry, fed on dirt heaps and dressed in grease; and the eggs, which according to an ancient writer,* two centuries, I believe, ago, "were laid and kept in their cabbins in dampes and musty stenches, and did partake of the same."

"They are not a bit improved since St. Patrick came over to see what *he* could do with them, that is my firm belief," said Tremlett, with a self-satisfied

* *Vide* Sir William Petty's Political Survey of Ireland.

smile at his own facetiousness; "and only look at that horse," he added, pointing to the lean, little well-bred mare which stood with heaving flanks at the door. "It could hardly go a yard—stopped at every rising ground."

"When, of course, you were informed by the driver," interrupted Fairholme, "that she was never known to do such a thing in the course of all her twenty years of life before?"

"Bedad thin and she was not, your Honour," put in Paddy, who was listening to the conversation. "She's the best mare to go between this and Daublin," and as he spoke he smoothed Biddy's "bald face" encouragingly.

"I don't know what you mean by going," said Tremlett, taking out his watch; "we've been two hours coming eight miles, and I have a good mind to report the fact of the great cruelty you have committed in driving such an animal at all. Why she is nothing but skin and bone; look at her ribs, and say if you ought not to be ashamed of yourself."

"Bedad thin, yer Honour," said Paddy, scratching his shock head, for he was sorely troubled between the claims of his mare on his championship, and his natural as well as *national* desire to agree in every opinion advanced by a gentleman. "Bedad thin,

yer Honour—she is poor, surely. It's the dhrop she has in her as does it, and sure she's a great little horse, and carries a dale of ground."

We all laughed, even Tremlett, at poor Paddy's excuses; and then the new arrival, who by his own account was extremely to be pitied, inasmuch as he was cold and wet and wearied, followed us into the little parlour—at the scant comforts of which, and its almost carpetless floor, he evidently looked with a considerable amount of contempt.

"We haven't got much of a house, you see," said my friend Edward, apologetically. "But we live a great deal out of doors, both on land and sea, and——"

"How about the weather?" put in Tremlett, sarcastically. "Here have I been three days in the country, and seen nothing but rain, and heard nothing but wind. I declare I never closed my ears last night for the noise of the wild west wind blowing and wailing over the Atlantic, and then coming with a thump and a bluster against the window-panes, till I thought they must all have been shattered by the concussion."

"Not at all," laughed Bertha. "They are used to it, as we are. You should have been on board the 'Humming Bird,' in the bay with us. It was

delicious, with the waves in the little harbour washing against her sides, and Con Navan (that's our second man) singing his wild ditties about colleens, and cows, and fairies, all mixed up together. It was quite delightful!"

I rather doubted whether the description given by his sister exactly came up to Tremlett's idea of an agreeable situation; for he only shrugged his shoulders, as he continued the solacing of his inner man with the broiled salmon and whisky punch which had been set before him.

The next morning, Mrs. Fairholme's discontented brother had something else to see and to hear besides the wind and rain, which had so sorely tried his patience and his temper; for a glorious sun shone out from the clear blue sky, while the small white fleecy clouds moving slowly onwards painted patches of a darker hue, and of strange fantastic shapes upon the green of the mountains where the white sheep cropped the dainty herbage, looking in the distance like scattered stones in places inaccessible to the foot of man.

I was the first awake in our wild mountain home, and the first in my greetings to the rather rare but ever-welcome sun as he warmed the walls of our often-moistened retreat, and reminded me of the

gracious promise which in this rain-visited country it is sometimes hard enough to remember:—"That spring-time and harvest shall not cease;" and that the "waters shall never more become a flood to destroy all flesh."

Our house—if such a cabin may be dignified by the appellation—was situated about eighty yards up a steep mountain-side, and round and about it were a few of such stunted trees and shrubs as had succeeded in defying the attacks, unremitting and severe, of the wind and rain so deprecated by our now sleeping guest. There was, however, a little garden in a sheltered nook, in the which Bertha took immense delight, luxuriating in its masses of the gaudy hydrangea, and the fuchsia with its crimson bells fluttering in the breeze, and on that pleasant early morning shaking its gorgeous sprays, wet and glistening with the rains of yesterday.

I was, as I have said, looking from my window, and admiring the pleasant sights around me, when, infinitely to my disgust, for the instrument is an object of my especial detestation, I was startled by the discordant sound of *pipes* beneath my window. Contrary to their wont, for the peasantry are great "lie-a-beds," an old man was lazily employed (the while he listened to the stirring hornpipe) in mow-

ing the miniature lawn that lay between the house-door and the mountain road. The said labourer's garments were anything but whole, the nether ones especially; for the divers-coloured patches had broken from their confining stitches, and hung loosely from about his limbs. His face was smileless, and his hair both scant and grey. Occupation seemed, as is usual with his class, distasteful to him, for ever and anon he paused in the performance of his legitimate duties, to mark how the world went on around him. But sluggish as his nature seemed, it was in the power of the pipes to infuse a new spirit into his breast; and as he leant upon his scythe to listen, I took note of the struggle that was warring within him. Duty said "mow on," but inclination and the dancing soul of an Irishman called him to the "jig," and Paddy, after a brief attempt at resistance, yielded to the strong and fierce temptation!

It was no small amusement to watch the ragged man's preparations for the dance, they, however, being simple enough, consisting merely in the removal of his battered hat, and the gathering together of his wandering locks; after which preliminary ceremony, he laid his scythe upon the ground, and the jocund sport began in earnest.

The extreme gravity of his countenance was in entertaining contrast with the rapid movement of his feet, nor was the former in the least degree modified by the arrival of a fair partner to share in the fleeting pleasure of the hour. The new performer, who had been watching his proceedings with silent longing from behind the door, was at length overcome by her desire to join in the amusement, and with a seriousness of manner fully equal to his own, she (a rosy housemaid—active and barefooted) placed herself opposite to her aged partner, and displayed for the space of twenty minutes a degree of skill and activity fully equivalent to his own. At the conclusion of the ceremony, a dignified salute, which would not have disgraced a *minuet de la Cour*, was exchanged between the two, and then the entertainment ended as suddenly as it had begun.

"Why, Biddy," said I to the girl, when I entered the little parlour where she was arranging the breakfast service, "you're a great dancer; but you should have had a younger boy."

"Troth, yer Honour," said Biddy, with a laugh, "it's the ould men that do be dancing betther nor the young boys the day. Sure it's Larry King was the grate dancer evermore. It's mysel' as minds

the day when as much as two pipers would be stopping in it; but it's little *foon* there'd be at all since the bad times came—bad cess to them, saving your Honour's presence." And Biddy heaved a tender and regretful sigh to the memory of bygone pleasures, as she departed to her daily duties.

"That girl's story is a melancholy one," said Fairholme, who, from having resided for more than a year in that portion of the West, was well acquainted with the private history of many of the country people. "She was courted, a year ago, by a young man—a fine *boy*, too, as they call a well-grown lad in this country; and indeed, for that matter, young Kelly would have deserved the appellation anywhere, for he was tolerably industrious, always good-humoured, and I believe, as far as circumstances and his religious education permitted—*honest*. But he came of a bad stock, and his father, who was an habitual drunkard, and a more than suspected sheepstealer, refused his consent to the alliance on which his son had set his heart."

"And why?" I inquired: "if the girl was, as you say, well conducted and of good repute."

"Why? Simply because poor little Biddy's marriage portion was less by a matter of five shillings

or so than the sum which the father declared would be equivalent to Owen's possessions. There was an old feud too, I fancy, between the families, but that was a minor consideration: for closely as Irishmen treasure up the memory of a wrong, they hug their money closer still, and——"

"But what were the possessions," interrupted Tremlett, "on which the man set so high a store?"

"I can hardly tell you—a cow, may be, and perhaps a pound's worth of silver. I have known a marriage in this country delayed for weeks for the sake of a three-and-sixpence which was not forthcoming on the lady's side when the eventful day was approaching."

"A hitch in the settlements," I put in, flippantly enough.

"Exactly. But this peculiarity in the Irish peasant is not without its good side, for there is something both respectable and praiseworthy in the strong feeling of duty—or call it what you will—which prompts them to lay by, even from their births, marriage portions for their daughters."

"True," I rejoined; "and I am now able to account for the condolences I once heard addressed by a poor man to his neighbour, on the birth of a *girl* to share the already over-crowded cabin.

'Shure you're in debt now, Paddy, any way,' he said."

"Which meant that a sum of money for the girl's dower was already owing to the imaginary, and perhaps still unborn individual by whom the young lady's hand might eventually be claimed. But to return to Johnny Kelly, who, as I have said, refused his consent to make his son happy, although the *boy* (they had but 'the one'), and the wife as well, prayed urgently night and day for the inexorable parent's consent. For a while they bore their sorrow and their waiting patiently, for Biddy was what they call a '*quite*' girl, and Owen (her betrothed) was 'loth to vex the mother;' but there is a limit to human endurance, and when that was arrived at, 'sorra a hap'orth' could they stay longer apart. But not to make my story too long—Owen persuaded Biddy, after a power of coaxing, to make a moonlight flitting of it, and that effected, they lost no time in appearing before the parish priest, with a request that he would make all smooth by joining them together in the bonds of matrimony. Now Father Maguire was a cunning fellow enough, and had as keen an eye to the silver as Johnny Kelly himself, so what did he do (knowing that the parties had a small something to begin the world with), but

insist upon their little wealth, 'and as much again to that,' being handed over to himself as the wedding fee! The case was an urgent one, and he knew it, so in spite of prayers, promises, and entreaties, he kept to the first word, *viz.*, that short of the sum of four pounds ten, paid in advance, poor Biddy had no chance of being made 'an honest woman' of—'that turn at least.'"

"How disgraceful," I exclaimed, "to put the screw on in such a case. But how did it end?"

"You shall hear," continued Fairholme, while Bertha's speaking face told me that the tale would be a sad one.

"What I am going to relate took place in another county, and several months ago, but the circumstances are still fresh in my recollection. Bertha and I had been out riding, and returning along the banks of a rapid river, we were surprised to see a large crowd, principally women, collected near the brink. It was evident that something not only unusual, but terrible, had occurred, for there rose from every throat the wild howl which the women of the country invariably send forth over a dead or dying fellow-creature, and in this instance the tumult and uproar were violent in the extreme. Leaving Bertha at a little distance, I made my way

through the crowd, and there learnt, to my horror and distress, that Owen Kelly lay drowning in the deep pool near which the crowd had assembled.

"'But, good Heavens!' I cried; 'are you doing nothing to get him out? How long has he been in the water?'

"'Twenty minutes, may be, your Honour,' said a young sailor, who seemed the most collected of the group; 'but sure it's in the dead man's pool he is, and sorra a person can be got alive out of that.'

"'Nonsense,' I exclaimed; 'you're no man yourself if you allow him to lie there unaided. Can you swim?'

"'I can, your Honour.'

"'And dive?'

"'I can, your Honour!'

"'Then more shame for you to be standing there idle. In with you at once, man, and——'

"But there is no need to dwell upon the arguments by which the sailor was at last induced to do my bidding. It is sufficient to say that his clothes were flung off, and that he dived resolutely beneath the water.

"Meanwhile, there stood (or rather staggered, for he was frightfully intoxicated) a tall, stout, middle-aged man beside the deep and silent pool. He

looked down into its depths, and you might have fancied that he saw through the watery space the body of his son beneath, for he called to him incessantly, and with frightful execrations, to 'come out of that at *wonst*, and not stay there hoombooging any longer.' It was frightful to hear the drunken father showering curses on the dead son, and piteous indeed to behold the wailing mother, with hidden face, keening for her lost and only one!

"I could gain but little information from those around me. Owen had not gone there to bathe, 'surely, for no person would venture in the dead man's hole, since a poor man drowned himsel' in it in the bad times.' There was a whisper, hushed and awe-stricken, that Owen, too, had perhaps committed the deed for which (though who dares put a limit to the Creator's mercy?) we fear that there is for sinful men no hope of pardon. Voices had been heard raised high in anger between the father and the son, and it was possible—though, with the mother near, they dared not say the word aloud—that Johnny, in his sottish fury, had hurried into eternity the boy whose ill-starred passion had made such ill blood between the two.

"But whilst these surmises were in the hearts and almost on the tongues of the wailing crowd, the

sailor, who had twice dived unsuccessfully beneath the ten feet of water, rose after a third attempt, and shouted that *he* was there. 'I couldn't rise him,' he said, as coming to the bank he *spluttered* forth the words. 'He hasn't the clothes on him, and he's lying heavy at the bottom.'

"Again the wild cry of the women broke forth, more shrilly than before, whilst the mother crept closer to the bank, and sitting down there rocked herself to and fro hopelessly.

"We sent to a little fishing harbour that was near for ropes and grappling-hooks, and with these, though with great difficulty and after considerable delay, we brought the lifeless form at last to land. He was quite dead: of that we entertained no doubt, for he had lain beneath the water for an hour; but still, to satisfy the mother and the howling crowd, we strove to call back the life into the black and swollen corpse. Very tenderly was the mother's sorrow dealt with by those men, who looked so rough and hardened; and when, after our exertions for her son's recovery were acknowledged, even by *her*, to be unavailing, I left her in her hovel (which stood near the relentless river), she was surrounded by uncouth yet warmly-sympathising friends."

"And was the cause of his death never ascertained?" asked Tremlett, when Alick paused for a moment in the recital of his story.

"Never. The coroner, who lived some twenty miles off, received a message on that night, to inform him of what had passed, but he took no notice of the occurrence any more than did the police; and on the following afternoon, all that remained of poor Owen Kelly was laid in the grave. He had a 'grate waking—plenty of whisky and fine singing, surely'—but the 'pipes' were short; for Tony Hogan, a 'small little fellow,' went into town for them on a wicked baste of a mule, and the crathur had him in the lake, and the pipes were broke on him enthirely.' The father was more than usually inebriated on the occasion; but he could 'sing afther.' Such a strange mixture of the ludicrous and the merrymaking is there in most Irish scenes and stories."

"And how far off was the burying-place—a long way, I should imagine?" was my remark; "for I have often been surprised by the rarity of cemeteries in this country."

"They had about ten miles to carry him," answered Fairholme, "and his coffin was followed by a long train of friends, while his funeral hymn

was the low wail of women and the sobs of the childless mother. The burying-ground is the most desolate spot you can imagine—a place haunted, as it is believed, by the 'gentlefolks,' or fairies, and from which mysterious lights are seen to gleam. It is crowded with graves, and the rotten and tumbling-down wooden crosses, black with age and exposure to the weather, rear their heads, closely packed together, above the long rank grass and weeds. The graves are very shallow, and human bones lie in the unwholesome herbage, uncovered and unnoticed."

"But you have yet to learn the most pitiful part of the story," said Bertha, sorrowfully, "for only two days after poor Owen's death, a letter came from his uncle in America, containing fifteen pounds, and a request that he would go out to him to New York, and seek a better fortune there. Only two days sooner, and all their misery might have been spared; for Biddy would have been his wife, and they and the old mother would have been in another country, and safe away from that horrid man."

"And Biddy—how did she come here, so far away from her own people? and how did she manage to recover her cheerfulness so speedily?" I asked.

"We found her a situation here, thinking it

better, under the circumstances, than allowing her to remain where her misfortune would be 'cast-up,' as they call it, to her. She was very unhappy for awhile, and her eyes were always red and weak, but hard work is almost a better remedy for affliction than time itself; and having no leisure for lamentation, Biddy has recovered her spirits, and can dance and laugh once more. They give her the 'majority' in a jig, I can tell you; and I hope some day that as good a boy as poor dead Owen will offer her his hand for life, and take her away to a more prosperous land."

There was silence after Edward's last words, which Tremlett broke by saying—

"It seems to me that, under Providence, the cause of all the evil was the rapacious priest, who drove Owen Kelly to desperation, and very probably to suicide: and these are the men that have influence over these wretched people! And this is the religion which they cling to so pertinaciously!"

"I suspect," said Fairholme, in reply, "that the instance I have quoted is anything but a common one, for the influence of the priests is kept up as much by kindness as by fear. They are wonderfully attentive to the wants of the poor, both in sickness and in health; and never refuse to attend the call of

the ailing—a call which is almost invariably made prior to the request for medical assistance."

"But how they threaten them!" pursued Tremlett. "How they hold over them the dreaded penalty of an unanointed death-bed, and of the untellable horrors of purgatory, aye, even of hell-fire for ever, should they venture within the walls of a Protestant church, and above all, if they are induced to listen to the sacred Word of God read or preached to them by Protestant believers."

"I grant all this," said Edward; "but at the same time I must repeat what I have often said before, namely, that the very existence of the priests depends in a great measure on their influence *over* the people, on the superstitious fears of the peasantry, and on their continuance in ignorance. We have taken from them the revenues of their church, and for their means of subsistence they have but the shillings and half-crowns bestowed upon them yearly or half-yearly, and at confessions, by the uneducated and patient flocks who follow their shepherds with a blind unquestioning obedience, which is in itself a virtue. But this is not all, for we should also remember in what spirit we come amongst them to disturb the faith of their congregations, and turn them from their obedience. Is there not, I ask you,

too often insult conveyed in the very countenances of those who call themselves the messengers of God's Word?—insult, pride, and angry challenge, when (in meek imitation of Him who came in love to turn sinners unto God) they would do well to clothe themselves with humility as with a garment."

"A garment!" said Tremlett, pettishly, "by which I suppose you would intend that the real object of the missionary's purpose should be concealed. The doctrine of expediency, in short, is the one which you are advocating—the expediency of temporising and keeping well with all! There should be no open profession of your faith, say you; no bold and steadfast standing by the Banner of your Salvation; but instead, you would give encouraging and deluding promises to all, knowing the while the tremendously dangerous nature of the evils you are tolerating, and despising yourself, I hope, internally, for the weakness you are betraying."

Tremlett spoke with considerable warmth, and with some disregard to the courtesy due to one so invariably gentle and refined in manner as the brother-in-law whose principles of action he had thus so unceremoniously attacked. But the latter, without any apparent notice of his slighting tone,

continued to state his reasons for the opinions he had advanced.

"You mistake my meaning," he said, "if you suppose that I counsel even a momentary hesitation as regards the open avowal of, and the strenuous advocacy in this country of our own belief. But because a work should be done boldly and unflinchingly, does it, in your opinion, follow that the workman should be violent in his operations, over-hasty in his proceedings, or the employer of tools *coarse*, and wholly unsuited to the kind of labour that has been set before them to accomplish?"

"And such, in your opinion," said Tremlett, "is the case with the excellent men who are devoting themselves heart and soul to the preaching of the Gospel amongst these heathen idolators? Truly if this is your view of the matter, and this the report you intend to spread abroad, your residence in this country has been in more ways than one a mistake and a misfortune; and you would do well to cut short your lingering here for your own pleasure, and proceed at once to the higher duty, to the performance of which you have pledged yourself."

"My dear Oswald," said Fairholme, still gently, although the effort to conceal his emotion was visible in his flushed cheek and slightly trembling

voice—"my dear Oswald, let us, if you please, avoid all allusions to family affairs, and to differences in opinion as regards their arrangement, for such discussions will not only be unproductive of benefit to ourselves, but they cannot fail to be annoying to the friend who has gratified us by becoming for a season as one of our family. I am aware that you must feel strongly on the subject to which you have alluded; and, if for that reason alone, it had far better—for the present at least—be abandoned."

"As you please," said Tremlett, rather more amicably, for he was perhaps somewhat ashamed of the *temper* he had betrayed; and as Bertha (whose anxious face during the discussion had not escaped my notice) proposed shortly after that we should put in execution the long-deferred project of a sail in the "Humming Bird" to some more distant islands, we with one accord gladly commenced our preparations for departure.

CHAPTER V.

MACKEREL FISHING—THE EAGLE'S NEST—BERTHA'S SORROW.

THE wind was fair for our voyage, being at N. E., and the breeze, though not strong, was steady enough.

There were many small boats afloat on the waters of the glorious bay, and the scene altogether was lively and exciting. Immense flights of snow-white gulls covered the surface of the sea in sheet-like patches, sending forth a shrill concert of screams that broke strangely on the silent air. Vast numbers of these noisy birds were constantly, as it seemed, settling on the water and diving after their prey, for the mackerel were "in" after the herring "fry," and every boat and net was out, whilst each eager fisherman was anxiously watching for his share of the booty which they trusted that the bounteous sea would roll on towards them.

Every eye was turned upon the birds, those har-

bingers of good things, and every ear intent on listening for their cry. And *when* they settled—and when the water, boiling up in wild confusion, and with a noise (calm as was the sea) as though a cataract were rushing down upon it, told them that a mackerel shoal was near, then the boats' crews shouted loud, and putting out their ponderous nets, rowed as if for life, to surround the troubled water.

We were looking from the deck of the "Humming Bird" at the scene I have been endeavouring to describe, and Tremlett, whose good-humour was entirely restored, had just finished quoting to Bertha those quaint and curious lines so loved by poor Thomas Hood, of—

"Up jumped the mackerel
With his striped back."

Says he, "Reef in the mainsa'l and haul up the tack—

"For it's windy weather,
It's stormy weather,
And when the wind blows, pipe all hands together—
For upon my word, it's windy weather:"

when Con Navan, who seemed experienced in such matters, proposed that, as one of the boats seemed likely to have a good haul, we should row to shore in the *dingy*, and see the result of the "cast."

The proposal met with unanimous approbation,

and just as the fishing-boat reached the beach, and commenced drawing in the net, we were alongside of the rocks, and ready to disembark on their slippery surface.

It was a scene of intense excitement, the hauling in of that heavy net by these wild-looking and vociferous men. They pulled with a will, for they knew the prize was well worth their toil, and not a man or boy relaxed his grasp upon the ropes for a second.

"Troth, and it's a good weight," said one old man, on whose weather-beaten face was written a volume of exposure to the stormy winds of heaven, and of scanty food as guerdon for his toil. "Pull away, boys! Ah, God help you, Martin, but it's a poor hand at the rope ye are!"

"Is it me?" cried Martin, hauling vigorously. "It wouldn't be yoursel' would be a-head of me the day, but for the cut I got—bad cess to it," and Martin looked down pityingly on a bandage which encased one of his bony fingers.

"Now for it, boys! Here they are—lashings of them! Bedad, but it's a great sight!" cried Con, who had volunteered his services on the occasion, and who was now dancing about in exuberant glee amongst the "striped backs" of the finny multitude.

In they came, leaping, panting, and struggling for their liberty in the sure meshes of the net. There were thousands of them—four thousand, as the *boys* had rightly surmised; nor had I much difficulty in giving credence to the correctness of their estimate, as the tossing things lay glistening in their many-shaded coats upon the yellow sea-weed.

It was an enlivening sight, that of the men's excited faces as they gathered up the net in readiness for another venture. To Edward they were most of them personally known, and for many he found a pleasant word.

"Why, Peter," he said to a remarkably plain-visaged individual, who to judge from his dress was greatly addicted to a sitting posture; "why, Peter, you're getting *too* rich. You won't know what to do with all your money. Why, you must have fifty pounds in the *thatch*, if you've a penny."

"Your Honour's joking," said Peter, rather indignantly. "It isn't the likes of me, with the long wake family, as would be rich the day. It's little enuff mysel' has in the fist, surely."

"But have you ten pounds in the house now, Peter?"

"I have not; and I wouldn't be telling a lie: but

I'm like to have that same before I part with your Honour."

"Ah, musha, thin, Pether. Aisy now," cried a laughing young fellow from the boat; "aisy now, and don't be hoombugging. It's over a power of gould he has, yer Honour. He could *roul* himself in it. But it's a poor thing he hasn't a daughter to portion afther."

And so, *chaffing* one another with good-humoured banter, they rowed away.

"Has that poor wretch really any money?" I asked, as we were returning to the yacht. "I think he can hardly be as poor as he looks, for you could scarcely have joked him on so sore a subject as his own destitution."

"He has many a good pound laid up for an evil day," answered Fairholme; "as every poor man should have. He spends no money (as you may perceive) on his scant personal adornment, except on Sundays, when Peter's turn-out in a good frieze suit is as respectable as any man's; but there is another cause for his unusual prosperity, and for the little chance there is that he and his will become a burthen on the parish to which they belong."

"And that cause is?——Pray tell me," said I, seeing that he hesitated; "for I am indeed curious

to account for such a phenomenon as Peter's case presents."

"The reason may be given in a few words," replied Edward, seriously. "The man is a paid labourer, and *not a tenant.* But we will not continue this subject now, for it is not fair to Bertha, who dreads discussions about grievances, and who will expect you to rave with her about all the lovely sights of earth, and sky, and water that we have come out on the ocean to behold."

The "Humming Bird," which had been lying-to during our short absence in the boat, was soon under way again, and with all her canvas set (for the wind was light), we sailed with the receding tide towards the open sea. Our progress was not rapid, but we did not wish it hastened, for every mile as we passed along its distance presented fresh beauties to our sight. Now, it was a grey and frowning mass of stones, perched at the summit of a steep acclivity, and imitating well one of the ruined castles, ivy-clad and time-honoured, that travellers go so far to see "upon the banks of Rhine." And farther away, a thatched cottage nestled among the rocks, with an acre or two of bright green grass surrounding it, and a look of prosperity surrounding the obscure abode, which said, as plainly as in

Edward's words, that the inhabitant thereof was *not a tenant.*

The faithful Job Collett, our English sailor, and "captain" of the craft, was at the helm, and Navan singing as usual at the forecastle, while a native "mariner" of the place who had been engaged as additional "hand" explained, and doubtless magnified, the wonders of the locality as we slowly continued on our way.

"So that is where the eagles' nest was taken," said I, after we had sufficiently admired the vigorous flight of two grand birds (the sovereign and his *larger* consort) as they wheeled above us in their sun-defying flight. "What a fearful place to reach: and how was the deed effected?"

I spoke to Fairholme, to whom the man had before appealed as witness to the truth of his assertions; and Edward, thus inquired of, related the adventure as it occurred.

"It seems," he said, "at first sight to be in every sense of the word a barbarous deed to shoot those splendid animals, which are now becoming rare among the mountains; and from those who do not suffer by their depredations, there is always a strong cry raised against those who lift a treasonable hand against the monarch of the air. But oppression

cannot be always patiently endured, and a despotic exercise of power has in all ages been visited by a proper and well-merited retribution. Bertha, who, as you may have perceived, is the most tender-hearted of women, was long before she would give her consent to a popular movement against the destructive autocrat of the upper regions; nor was it till I had proved to her how many innocent and defenceless animals fall victims to his rapacity, that she would allow me to join in a conspiracy against him."

"What nonsense he talks," cried Bertha merrily, as she laid her hand upon her husband's arm. "Edward, how dare you make me out such a simpleton?"

"I only repeat facts," rejoined Fairholme, "and as long as I keep to them there must be no interruption to my story; but, however singular it may appear that a woman should lean to the side of mercy, I maintain that till this foolish wife of mine saw with her own eyes an eagle swoop down upon, and seize within his talons, the newly-born offspring of a then desolate and broken-hearted sheep, she persisted in believing the monster bird to be an innocent and much-wronged individual. Well, my merciful Bertha's consent being at last obtained, I,

taking my rifle in my hand, proceeded (with the permission of the proprietor of the mountain) to take my measures for the extirpation of the tyrant. Half a dozen stout 'boys' offered to assist in the work, and one, the most active of them all, and a good cragsman, was engaged as the actual perpetrator of the deed which we hoped would destroy the dynasty of the reigning despot.

"The hollow in the rock which you see before you is a good twelve hundred feet above the level of the sea (that's right, Stephen, let her lie-to a minute while you mark the place; and now, Mark, take your glass, and look at it). You see how sheer and perpendicular is the fall, and perhaps you can also perceive that a few feet beneath the nest is a small grassy slope of a few inches only apparently in width."

"I see it," was my rejoinder, "and also a slightly projecting rock above the nest hollow. The rock seems to be the termination of a sort of platform."

"Exactly," pursued Edward, "and now you must try to imagine yourself on that platform, to which you have descended over the summit of the mountain, and from the other side, where the ascent is comparatively easy. The air on the morning we

had chosen for our expedition was beautifully clear, and the view over land and distant ocean wonderfully distinct. Save our own whispered voices there was no sound excepting the unresting one of the full mountain rill, and the faint bleating of the sheep as they cropped the sweet but scanty herbage.

"We neared the edge of the projecting rock cautiously, and looking down, decided where best to lower (with the stout ropes we had brought) the 'boy' who was to take the nest. There was a little hesitation in his manner as he marked the fearful danger of the spot (and I, too, was beginning to feel again the strength of the two-inch rope by which he was to be lowered), when there was a cry from one of the men, and looking down in the direction to which he pointed, we saw at once the cause of his sudden exclamation, for a dog—a fine honest Colly who had been our companion up the mountain, and whose sagacity and prompt obedience had often before excited my admiration and respect —was no longer of our party; his days of faithful service were over, and he now lay, a lifeless body, hundreds of yards below us.

"His master had seen him (in headlong chase after a startled hare) approach the grass-covered edge of

the precipice. He called him, but it was too late. The impetus of his course could not be checked, and the shepherd's faithful friend lay dead beneath our feet!

"The loss of the animal had a singular effect in rousing the courage of the party, more especially that of the stalwart Tim, who now displayed the most marked readiness to descend and perform the task required of him.

"'Bedad,' said one of the men, 'but that's the great *look* enthirely.'

"'Troth, an' it is,' cried another. 'But for the dog, it's the jintlefolks* would have had the life of a good boy the day.'

"'Now, thin,' shouted Tim, suddenly full of bluster and bravery; 'now, thin, boys, for the tying,' and, evidently satisfied of the wrath of the fairies at our intrusion being appeased by the sacrifice of the unfortunate Colly, all hands set to work to prepare the adventurous Tim for his descent.

"He was soon bound, and as speedily, but very carefully, lowered to the nest. There was silence for a minute or two, and then a shout from below of—

"'Ah, musha, now, but it's a grate sight. Sorra the likes of it ever you see.'

* Fairies.

"'How many birds in the nest, Tim?' I shouted.

"'Two, yer Honour, and strong bastes, too, by the blessing of God.'

"A sudden fancy to see the interior economy of an eagle's domicile seized me on this announcement; and calling to Tim, we prepared him for being at once drawn up again as a preliminary movement to my taking his place in the ropes as a visitor to the royal nursery.

"'Sure, yer Honour 'll be desthroyed,' said Tim, when he was landed from the air. 'It's a coorse place to go down itsel', and——'

"But I cut short his remonstrances, feeling convinced that, in order to enhance his own merit in having dared the danger, he would increase it tenfold at least in his description.

"After all, it was no very adventurous undertaking, for the ropes were strong, and had borne in the person of Tim a far heavier weight than mine; but still the flattering and admiring faces of the 'boys' (for an Irishman can talk blarney even with his eyes) made me feel rather like a hero as the cord was bound about me. In a minute I was swinging in empty space, and confessing to myself that the situation, as well as being a novel one, was not altogether agreeable in the sensations it produced.

"My rifle was in my hand, loaded and ready to be used in case one of the parent birds should venture near us; but I must acknowledge that when my feet touched *terra firma*, and I saw the hen eagle hovering about fifty yards from the nest, I was at first too much excited by my ariel *trajet* to be able to take aim at her.

"The ground near the nest was covered with the whole and half-eaten remains of the animals which had been provided for the nutriment of the brood. It was indeed an admirably filled larder, and the variety of food collected must have been highly gratifying to the appetites of the rapacious brood. There were remains of hares innumerable, as they seemed to me, and of grouse, too, in profusion, whilst a dozen lambs at least had contributed their quota to the well-supplied commissariat.

"After casting a hasty glance around me, I looked into the nest, which was a large, untidy, and most unregal mass of confusion. It was formed in the cleft of a rock, from the entrance to which there issued a noisy and anything but harmonious duet of mingled croaks and cries. The calls of their young were doubtless heard by the parent birds, who were hovering near; and as I thought upon the mother's mental sufferings, I cannot deny that my

conscience smote me for a moment at the recollection of the deed I meditated. But the sight of the mutilated remains about me steeled my heart, and I raised my rifle remorselessly to my shoulder.

"Suddenly (for their turns in the air are very rapid) the bird at which I aimed whirled round beneath me, and then was in a moment hidden from my view. There was no time for thought of danger; moreover, I was now heated with pursuit, and eager for success. My prey, I knew, was near me, though beyond, or rather beneath my sight, for the jutting rock below the platform prevented my seeing what was passing there. To command the view from which that obstacle debarred me, was now of course my object, and therefore, holding my rifle in readiness to fire, I rashly sprang from where I stood to the little grassy ledge that you have noticed. It stands at a giddy height—does it not? Keep your eyes upon it, and then, when I have told you of the frightful peril from which I was mercifully preserved, you will own, I think, that it is well for me to be thankful.

"On springing from the level spot near the nest (and I must first say that the men no longer held the cord within their grasp) I had neither reckoned on the slippery nature of the short grass on the *decline*

of the little ledge, nor on the impetus of my own spring forward. The whole affair was the work of a moment, but when my feet touched the ground it was as though they slid on ice! Scarcely half a yard in width was the sloping spot of verdure on which I had alighted, whilst beneath me was a fearful fall of twice five hundred feet!"

"What a horrible situation!" said I, fully realising it, as I scanned the almost perpendicular mountain side. "But what could you do? And how did you escape?"

"By the instinct of self-preservation, which caused me to *dig* my heels into the grass, which was happily soft; but I could not have stood it long, for my head is contemptibly weak, and the aspect of that awful void which *would* be looked at appalled me, while it made my senses reel. Bertha, why do you look so pale? I am here, thank God, to tell the story, for the men gathered up the cord that (seeing me, as they thought, in safety) they had loosened, and when I knew they had me safely in their hands (poor *chétif* mortal that I am), I took heart of grace, and fired off my rifle at the still hovering bird."

"And shot him too, I hope?" asked I. "After all your trouble you deserved to be rewarded."

"Yes," answered Ned regretfully, "I did not miss

my aim, but she was only wounded—the bold, beautiful creature, that fairly dared me for her children's sake. Her leg was broken; and often since, perched low upon the rocks, we have seen the halting eagle, with loosely-hanging claw, and Bertha and I have sorrowed for her."

"And what became of the young birds?" asked Tremlett, who had listened with great apparent interest to Edward's story.

"One of them was injured in the taking of it from the nest, but the other survived to be, by its ferocity, the torment of Tim's existence. What he suffered of mental torture during the process of tending on it would be hard to describe, and we were often amused by watching his attempts to propitiate its favour by using endearing epithets, such as 'Pretty Poll,' 'Polly agra,' &c. He always called the eagle 'Poll,' to our infinite entertainment. It grew to be a magnificent bird, and is now an inhabitant of the Zoological Gardens at ——. But by the powers, as Mike would say, how late it is! Why, Collett man, what has become of the wind, and how far do you expect to take us to-night?"

The helmsman smiled grimly, and looked vaguely at the sky, while Mike (the odd man) prognosticated that as the wind had gone down with "the tide of

ebb," there was little likelihood of its rising again for some time to come.

On this announcement we held council together, and agreed that if, after an hour's wandering on the sea-beach (the which we could easily reach in the *dingy*), there were no signs of a breeze, we would remain at anchor for the night, and pursue our voyage, if possible, on the morrow.

The sun was setting when our boat landed us on the fine smooth sand against which the waves rippled softly. For a while we wandered there, and then, climbing to the summit of an adjacent rock, we looked around us. A thousand hues were gleaming from the west, and were reflected on the mountain tops in softened crimson, and in palest gold. The sea was without a wave, and the solitude profound indeed!

Tremlett had strayed to a distance with Fairholme, and Bertha was left standing by my side.

"You love the west?" I said to her, "or you would scarcely have spent so long a season on these silent shores."

"I am *forced* to love it," she replied; and there was a curious toning of the words, whilst I, who gazed at her inquiringly, saw that her eyes were full of tears.

"There is a sorrowful meaning in your words," I said, at length, "and it is hard to guess why you are *obliged* to love this wild and watery land."

"Do not ask me," was Bertha's low-voiced answer. "Edward will tell you why—Edward will trust you soon. But, oh, how I wish that Oswald would not irritate and grieve him! He is so gentle—so enduring. And yet my brother is a good man too; but it is hard to understand the strange discrepancies in his character. Look at them yonder. How earnestly they are talking! and every word is paining Edward—I know it is, as surely as if my ears could hear them! God help us!" she added, as if speaking to herself; and I, feeling that any remarks of mine would be misplaced, followed her in silence down the rock and to the beach.

CHAPTER VI.

PATSEY'S NON-CONFESSION—THE MISGUIDED MINISTER —ZEAL WITHOUT DISCRETION.

THERE was much in Bertha's looks and manner which, coupled as was their singularity with my own previous observations on Tremlett's bearing towards his brother-in-law, gave me food for anxious thought. It was clear to me that, in a certain fashion, my old friend stood in fear of the man who had been in early manhood his intimate companion, and who was now bound to him by close ties of relationship: and yet, although it was evident that he shrank almost nervously from Tremlett's companionship, aye, even from his voice, as though the sound of it were painful to him, it did not strike me that the sentiment of repulsion arose from any consciousness on Edward's part of personal error, or that on his breast there lay the burthen of a guilty secret.

That there existed a mystery—and that a great and serious one—I did not entertain a doubt; whilst

I felt equally convinced that wrong-doing, if wrong there had been, could not be laid to the charge of my true and noble-hearted friend.

With this conviction on my mind, and feeling that the presence of Tremlett had always a deadening effect on our social enjoyment, I was by no means sorry when, on our return to the yacht, he confessed himself fatigued, and, stretching his long limbs on the cabin sofa, left us the undisturbed enjoyment of the deck.

It was late, and Bertha had already retired to rest, when Edward and I, leaning over the low bulwark, marked the pale gold warning of the coming moon, as her faint light showed itself above the dusky mountains. We watched her, till the fair bright orb—the gracious "Harvest Moon"—threw over all the earth her silvery mantle; and till, sailing onwards through the cloudless ether, her reflection sparkled near us in the rippling water of the bay. The voice of man would have seemed to jar against the stillness of the scene; and it was not till a distant sound of coming wind was heard, that Edward in a low voice addressed me thus:

"Is it not a cause for wonder," he said, "the extent to which the resolves we have made but a few hours previously may be broken down by a

few chance words, or by the mere presence or absence of a human being, who would scarcely seem capable of influencing either our feelings or our actions?"

"It is an affair of association of ideas frequently, I imagine," was my commenced rejoinder, but Fairholme interrupted me, by continuing, what I may almost call, his *soliloquy*, so little at the moment did he appear either to feel or appreciate my presence.

"And then how changed is often the very colouring of our feelings, from a dark, cold, tomb-like hue to bright and glowing tints; even as we have seen the gloomy mountain summits catch upon their rugged faces the rosy reflection of the setting sun, which tinges them with the momentary and delusive painting of the hour!"

"You are thinking of Tremlett," I said, incautiously, and in allusion to his first remark, "and of the effect which his coming has produced upon us all?"

"Hardly that," he answered, rousing himself, "for my thoughts were at that moment fixed on Bertha, and on the power she happily possesses of luring me on to a more cheering view of existence, and its daily duties. The day may come, Hutton, when you will better understand all that my wife

has been to me—how that she has been as the very conductor to the lightning, which has darted through the gathered clouds, and—— But I will not dwell upon the gloomy side of life, nor weary you with my painful retrospections. Let us speak again on the subject with which we were occupied when Tremlett broke in so inopportunely on our conversation. It is one with which the history of the past two years of my life is strangely connected and amalgamated, as you will probably at no very distant period be able to verify."

I had hoped, from the turn which Fairholme's ideas had apparently taken, that some clue to the mystery by which he was surrounded would be held out to me, but I was doomed to disappointment, and could only murmur a few words expressive of my deep interest in all that concerned either himself or those dear to him.

"I cannot argue calmly with Tremlett," was his next remark, "on such topics as those we were discussing—he is so thoroughly prejudiced, and so persistent in his determination to see only one side of an all-important subject. I, too, as I am well and painfully aware, have many strong prepossessions to make war against, and have to feel my way cautiously, and step by step, in the difficult pathway I

have entered on. You have wondered often, I dare say, my dear old Mark," he continued, laying his hand affectionately on my shoulder, "at the length of time which we had already spent, before your arrival, in this uninviting country; but time will clear up all that has seemed mysterious in my conduct, and will prove to you that, on more grounds than one, that which I consider as a sacred duty has led me to the course I have pursued."

"I do not doubt it," I rejoined, returning his cordial grasp; "but still I am at a loss to comprehend in what manner the success, or otherwise, of the Church Missions can affect either you or your plans in life."

"Time will show," said he, with a mournful smile; "but this much I will say, that feeling and deploring both my ignorance and my prejudices, I have endeavoured to enlighten the one, and remove the other by a patient investigation of the truth. You have heard," he continued, after a pause, "some of the opinions and sentiments which, in common with many earnest and excellently intentioned Christian men, Oswald Tremlett holds concerning the conversions—as they are called—of the Papistical peasantry in this country?"

"Yes," I replied; "nor have I failed to remark

that a wholesale and entire condemnation of everything contained in the doctrines of the Church of Rome forms the basis of these injudiciously made attempts at proselytising."

"True, and the evils of such a proceeding are, in my opinion, incalculable; for it is impossible wholly to *run down*—if I may be allowed the expression—the teaching of the priests, without at the same time falsifying some of the truths which are inculcated by our religion as of the most vital importance to salvation: and the result of such a proceeding cannot fail to be an indescribable and dangerous state of confusion in the minds of the ignorant and the unreasoning."

"I can quite understand that such must be the case," was my rejoinder; "for the good works, to the doing of which we are so frequently enjoined in the Bible, are but too frequently cited by the missionaries as so many snares and occasions of falling; while the people, in their ignorance, are led to consider that prayer (inasmuch as it is greatly insisted on by the Romish Church) is considered by *ours* as a hindrance of salvation."

"A consequence," continued Edward, "among others innumerable, of the illogical, inferior, and ill-instructed men who represent the Protestant reli-

gion in Ireland, both as missionaries and as belonging to the Established Church. I have had some opportunities of judging, and I can speak positively to the fact that so it is."

"But how," I asked, "can we account for this being the case, at least as regards the latter class, for they are magnificently paid, with very little to do, and——"

"Little indeed! Often receiving an income of several hundreds for the cure of scarcely more than a nominal congregation, while the poor missionary clergymen (in their churches, built not unfrequently by contributions from Papist-dreading old ladies at home, and for the convenience of some Protestant landowner in their neighbourhood) hold forth to the few doubtful converts they have succeeded in making, and whose numbers are, I am sorry to say, terribly exaggerated in the reports which appear in this country, and which are so greedily swallowed by the Anti-Papistical amongst us."

"And they carry about their little congregations with them to considerable distances," I said, "at least I have heard so, in order to swell the apparent numbers of their proselytes; while, from what you have said, I firmly believe that the class of hot-headed, under-bred, converting clergymen, who

endeavour vainly to put an end to the religion of the masses, have not prospered in their work to the extent which the published reports would lead us to believe."

"They have begun at the wrong end," said Fairholme, "and overlooked the fact that it is to the enlightenment of the *children's* minds they must look for success. That tree," he added, pointing to a bent and aged holly which grew near the shore, "bids defiance to the tempest, and remains unchanged by the winds that blow upon it; but the seedling beneath its shade can be bent according to the will of those who tend it, and is swayed by the faintest murmur of the pure breath of heaven!"

"But," I remarked, "the Church Mission *has* its schools, and schools, too, that figure largely in the reports I have alluded to, in Exeter Hall, as well as in the meetings of the West Connaught Society. Are these mere *myths* then, and are we to disbelieve every statement regarding the progress of the missionaries' labours?"

"Your question," replied Fairholme, "will, I think, be best answered by detailing to you the fate of a Protestant school, in the success of which I was at one time deeply interested. The population, the children of which were in the habit of attending

it, were entirely composed of Catholics, but as the school-house was situated in a rather un-get-at-able region, and was, from local circumstances, less than ordinarily exposed to priestly influence, there is every probability, that had those entrusted with the management of the school acted with even the smallest amount of moderation and judgment, the education of the little Papists would have gone on and prospered to this day."

"And what caused the breaking up of the establishment?" I demanded, "for I conclude that it exists no longer."

"It does," replied Fairholme, "but only in name; for it is in the last stage of decay and decrepitude. In fact, it is only kept up at all, in order that the Mission reports may record a school in the district; and two Protestant children are taken to it occasionally, that some *colour* may be given to the report. But now for my story, and for the rise and fall of the undertaking from which I confess to having at one period hoped for such good results.

"Not many months ago, and before you were even cognisant of our residence in the country, Bertha and I were sojourning in a pretty cottage which I had hired in the neighbourhood of which I speak; our servants, few in number, were Roman Catholics,

and one, the man who looked after our horses and the 'outside car,' was a good, simple fellow, with an extensive family and extremely limited means.

"A short time before we left the cottage, it was certified to the people that a Confession would be held on a particular day, at the house of one of the peasants. A *station*, as it is called, is a great day for the priests, for the host half ruins himself to do him (or rather *them*, for they always go in pairs) due honour, while fat is the goose and plentiful the whisky that is indulged in at those festive scenes. On the occasion in question the 'clergy,' as they are called by the peasantry, after remaining some four hours at their apostolic duties, returned home, a distance of about fourteen miles, passing as they did so by our cottage.

"'There go two as courageous men as I can imagine,' was my remark to Bertha, as they trotted gaily forward on their mountain ponies. 'Courageous, indeed, for by depriving them of the right of individual judgment, they take upon themselves the awful responsibility of the eternal life or death of thousands, perhaps, of ignorant human beings!'

"They were soon out of sight, those self-satisfied keepers of human consciences, and then, seeing that

Patsey, the simple serving man, who stood near, was also gazing after them anxiously, I addressed him thus :

"'Patsey—how comes it that you are so soon back from confession? Why, you should have taken a long holiday to-day, man, if ever you did.'

"'Ah, thin, yer Honour, it is'nt a holiday I'd be afther having at all.'

"'And why not?'

"'Shure, his Riv'rence would'nt hear me confession afther,' and Patsey sighed heavily.

"'Well, that was hard, and you going all that way to see him. But, Patsey, you kept your shilling—you've got that to the good at least?'

"'Troth an' I have not, yer Honour—for Father Maguire took it off me—he did.'

"'That was too bad: but what reason did he give for not hearing you? Surely it is not usual to take the *fee*, and then refuse the promised advice. Didn't Father Maguire explain the motives for his conduct?'

"'He did, yer Honour. It was along of the childre, and bekase I wouldn't be afther saying they should keep away from the school. His Riv'rence won't come, he says, when the likes of us are sick, if we do be sending the childre to the Mission

school. Ah, musha! but it's a poor thing not to have the schooling.' And again poor Patsey gave vent to his feelings in a groan-like sigh.

"'And have the priests warned all the parents not to send their children to the school?'

"'They have, yer Honour—and sorra a one in the village will go agin them, barrin' mysel', and bekase I didn't think it ud be plazing to yer own Honour.'

"'You will do what your conscience tells you is right, Patsey,' said I, 'without asking me anything about the matter. I have already told you how wrong I consider it of the priests to prevent your reading the Word of God, and judging for yourselves who is right in this matter. Why, man!' I continued, having recourse to an interrogation which I had more than once found wonderfully efficacious in disturbing their blind allegiance to their priestly rulers—'Why, man, do you suppose they keep the Bible from the *rich?* Not a bit of it. *They* are allowed to read it, and the priests have no right to keep such a privilege from you, only because you are poor, and because *your* knowledge would be their exposure. Don't fancy,' I went on to say, 'that I am altogether against your religion; there are some things most excellent and admirable in it,

for you are told to pray to God continually, and *your* faith also teaches you how great and incessant is the duty to help the poor amongst you that are in need. But there is one fearful fault committed by your priests,—for which may God in His mercy pardon them,—and that fault is, the withholding of the words of Scripture from the poor.'

"Patsey listened attentively to my words, and it may be that for a moment he was startled by their import, whilst I, curious to know how far Father Maguire had worked upon the fears of the people, ordered the horses for Bertha and I to take our ride towards the village.

"We had not proceeded far when we were met by a very intelligent man, the occupant of a small farm, and who, though a Catholic, was without prejudice against the Reformed Religion.

"I immediately stopped my horse and addressed him—

"'So, there has been a change, I hear, Mr. Lynch,' I said. 'I fancied the priests were willing that the children should go to the Protestant school, and now I hear that they have forbidden the parents to send them there?'

"'They have, and it's a pity; but it's just themselves as is to blame for it. Look here, sir,' he

continued, showing me a printed paper, in the form of a tract, that had evidently been trampled in the mud; 'see this. It's a shame to be throwing such things in the road before the priests. It's cowardly and insulting.'

"I took the paper from his hands, and ran my eye over its contents, which were neither more nor less than a violent attack on the religion of the priests and people; the whole written in the worst style of what may well be called 'controversial slang.'

"'Bad, indeed,' I said, 'and who are the perpetrators of this act? for they are of course known or guessed at.'

"'Who should they be, sir,' answered Lynch, 'but those ignorant, set-up scripture-readers and schoolmasters?—fellows who had nothing but rags to their backs awhile ago, and that now have dress-coats and silk umbrellas, if you please; and that turn the could shoulder to their frinds as hasn't got up in the world like theirsels! "No *slavery* boots for me," as I heard one of them say; and all along of the shoemaker having put the nails into them! It's for the fine clothes they *joomp* most times. Why, sir, there was a young girl as joomped backwards and forwards as many as a dozen times, jist as whin she wanted to be dressed out in a new gown

and bonnet.' And, laughing heartily at this facetious view of the matter, Mr. Lynch went on his way.

"There was for many weeks a sanguine anticipation that the people, relieved from the actual presence of the priests, would disobey the orders of their spiritual directors, and send their children once more to receive instruction at the hands of the promoted peasant boy, whose hot-headed desire to please those who had appointed him as instructor had caused so much evil to the village. But weeks passed away, and then, to the dismay of the Protestant enthusiasts, a teacher sent by Father Maguire made his appearance on the scene. His salary was paid by those who despatched him on his mission, but his board and lodging were gladly provided by the parents whose children he had come to teach. You may imagine that this was considered to be a terrible state of things, and that a movement was at once made to dislodge the enemy.

"'Sure,' said the Mission minister (he was a violent man—one who had several times been in hot water for unnecessary and dangerous *meddling*), 'sure,' he said one day to the powerful and also liberal proprietor of the village, 'you won't be letting that fellow stay in yer cottages—ye'll *hoont* him out of coorse.'

"'Indeed I won't,' said the liberal man. 'They want their children to be taught to read and write, and if you by your absurdities drive them from one teaching they have a right to look for another.'

"'But sure if you ordered them to send their children to school, they couldn't but do it.'

"'Of course not, and it's for that very reason I won't interfere. As long as they think it right to obey their priests, I won't force them to commit the sin of disobedience. One thing, however, I am willing to do for you,—but there must be some alteration first in your system, I imagine, or your school will remain, as it is now, *empty*.'

"'And what's that?' asked the minister, sharply. 'What alteration would you be for having?'

"'Simply this. You must enable me to assure Father Maguire that there shall be no *abuse* of the religion which you so profoundly execrate; and, moreover, that the children shall not be forced to read any Bible but the one allowed by the priests, namely, the Douai Bible.'

"The minister looked at the liberal landlord with eyes of horror.

"'The Douai Bible!' he exclaimed, almost frantically. 'Sure you're not aware that in the Douai Bible the word *penance* is substituted for penitence?

And you would be for putting such a book into the children's hands? Sure you're joking.'

"It was almost laughable (for I was present at the conversation) to see the dismay that the bare idea of so dangerous an innovation excited in the breast of the missionary; and the absurdity of his line of argument induced me to take a part in the discussion.

"'And so,' I said, 'sooner than allow the children's eyes to rest upon the one or two scattered words which, to their untrained and uncontroversial minds, would convey no perilous meaning, you keep from them the startling sentences and searching texts which, from the beginning to the end of the Revealed Word, convict their priests of error, and justify us in our simple faith.'

"The minister's stolid face showed no signs of yielding, nor did he even deign to continue the argument, but said, doggedly—

"'It couldn't be done, any way—it's against the rules of the Mission.'

"'Then,' continued I, 'suppose you agree to Mr. ——'s proposal, and, abstaining from controversy with these infant Papists, permit them to *hear* the Bible read by the two small Protestants who at present are your only scholars. Surely in this

manner the exigency of the case might be met, and the children would certainly have a better chance than at present of escaping from the dangers of Popery.'

"'It's against the rules of the Mission,' was again the missionary's uncompromising reply. 'The Romanists *must* be made to read our Bible themselves; and we are bound both to talk controversy, and to preach it to these *idolators*.'

"What more could we urge in favour of a better system to a man so prejudiced and bigoted? Clearly nothing; so, in disgust at our failure, and in pity for the wrong-headed stupidity both of the 'minister' and his employers, we went our several ways regretfully."

"And," demanded I, when Fairholme had paused awhile for breath, after his long narrative, "have the scholars never returned to the Protestant teaching? And have not the peculiar circumstances of the case induced any modification of the laws laid down by the Mission?"

"I am sorry," replied Edward, "to answer your last question in the negative, for experience has taught these Christian rulers *nothing*. Nine months have now elapsed since the famous prohibition of the triumphant Father Maguire, and during that

period not a child, with the exception of the Protestants, has set its foot within the school. The young schoolmaster receives his pay (twenty-four pounds a-year) for doing nothing; and while his parents—whom he neglects—go about in rags and misery, he *loafs* about in *peg-tops* of good broadcloth; and (according to old Lynch) with a dandy silk umbrella in his hand. However, enough has been said on a subject which I fear is wearying you; but if I have convinced one capable of making known the truth that there are in this small religious world grave mistakes to be corrected, I shall not have talked in vain."

"You have indeed shown me," was my reply, "that reform is necessary; but before we dismiss the subject, I must again request you to tell me what measures you would advise to be taken in a matter of such vital importance. Surely you would not abandon the scheme because those who conduct it are incompetent to the work! Nor can I believe that you would, by beating a retreat, leave the field of battle in possession of the conquerors."

"You do me no more than justice," rejoined Fairholme, gravely, "for my residence in this unhappy country, far from lessening my horror of a system to which may be attributed at least half of

the evils which we see around us, has increased that horror a hundred-fold. Let us look around us. Everywhere we meet with instances of theft, of falsehood, and of ingratitude. This is the *rule*, and rare indeed are the exceptions; while I do not hesitate to affirm, that it is partly to our own short-sighted policy that we owe the dangerous influence of so low a class of priesthood as we have entailed upon this country and people. Ill-paid themselves, and forced to wring their very means of existence from the pitiful earnings of the peasant, with the daily sight, too, before their eyes, of fat livings—sinecures, in many instances—of their Protestant enemies, can we marvel at the consequences, or that, besides the daily task on *their* part of keeping up the worst feeling in the people's minds against the Saxon, and the Protestant invader, they should also, by their teaching, encourage those especial vices of ingratitude and treachery which have made Ireland a bye-word amongst nations?"

"I fear your picture is a true one," I put in, "and also that its truth was equally manifest in the earlier records of these luckless people. More than two hundred years ago, as one reads, they were 'accused (as a community) of much treachery, falseness and thievery;' and that these are their charac-

teristics at the present day can only be accounted for by a system of misrule, and (as you assert) by the evil influence of a low-class and necessarily self-interested priesthood."

"I fully concur in the justice of your remark," responded Edward, "but the question of Irish misrule, connected though it may remotely be with church matters, is not one with which we have at present to deal. What mostly interests me is the manner in which the influence of the priests bears upon the character of the people—how it degrades, and how it plunges them into disgrace and guilt; and, to begin the subject, let us take from their own promulgated writings proofs of the fearful danger of their doctrines: the which having investigated, I think you will agree with me that, to an ignorant and easily-excited people (a people, too, whose poverty naturally leads them to view the rights of property with *prejudiced* eyes), such doctrines are fully sufficient to account, not only for the above-named national characteristics, but also for the more serious crimes for which Ireland has been, during many years, so unhappily notorious.

"There is a little book," continued Edward, still more gravely,—"a book published under the sanction of an Irish archbishop, a few extracts from which

would alone go far to prove the truth of what I have advanced. In this book the people are distinctly told that the '*act* of confession takes away sin *directly*,' however great that sin may be. Also they are instructed that if '*in the morning before you get up you make the sign of the cross and say, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart and soul,* you get an indulgence of one hundred days, which, if you wish to do so, you may give to the souls in purgatory.'

"The confusion likely to arise in the minds of the ignorant between venial and mortal sin, must be also very great. For instance, as regards the sin of stealing, I will quote from memory the very words of the book:—'*It is a mortal sin to steal much. If you steal from different persons, it needs half as much again for a mortal sin; and the same if you steal at different times. If you steal from different persons as well as at different times, it needs double the sum. If you steal often a little, when the little sums come to make together a large sum, then it becomes a mortal sin.*'

"It does not, I think, require much perspicacity to see the evil which a teaching such as this entails. I could cite many instances in this little work of a similar tendency, but I will content myself with one,

namely, that which regards the keeping of a promise. '*A promise*,' it is said, '*is often no more than the expression of one's intention*;' and '*a promise to give does not oblige at all when things change so much afterwards that, if you had foreseen it, you would not have made the promise.*' "

I was greatly struck by the words quoted to me by Fairholme, and could not refrain from fully agreeing with him in the opinion that the reputation for untrustworthiness, of "treachery and thievery," which the Irish have so long "enjoyed," was partly to be accounted for by the evil teaching they have received.

"There can be little doubt—at least, I have long believed so," continued Fairholme—"that there exist such evil things as atmospheric characteristics—chronic sins and weaknesses fostered by the habit of centuries, till the indulging in them becomes, so to speak, as necessary as the air, with which they are filled. Now, in this matter of the keeping, or otherwise, of a promise given, I have heard enlightened men in this country—men on whose word and honour I would implicitly rely—declare that in their opinion a promise might be broken, should it have been made under circumstances at the time unknown to the maker, and which rendered the keeping of it detrimental to his interests."

I laughed. "A strange idea, indeed," I said, "and one which, considering how inclined human beings naturally are to look *first* to their own interests, leaves indeed a wide margin to be filled up. It is a melancholy thing, and a dangerous, when a promise ceases to be a sacred thing; and, in my opinion, *only* the voluntary and guilty misleading of the *promisee* can absolve the individual bound from the consequences, however injurious to himself, of the solemn engagement he has entered into."

"You would find in this country very few, I fear, who would take the same view of the case," rejoined Fairholme, "and thence, partly, the low estimate that is generally entertained on our side of the Channel of Celtic truth and justice. That they have—I mean the enlightened amongst the population—their own code of honour, which many obey religiously, I do not deny; and, after all, why are we called upon to blame them because that code differs somewhat from our own?"

CHAPTER VII.

A SIGHT OF SEALS—OULD LARRY—DEEP SEA FISHING.

THE sun had fully risen before any stir on board the "'"Humming Bird" betokened that the little vessel was other than a painted ship upon the tranquil waters of the bay.

The calm of the air was still profound—not a breath of wind was to be felt, and the broad Atlantic was so unruffled that it reflected in its mirror-like surface every feature of the mountain side near which the cutter lay. Beautiful in the early sunshine appeared the dark grey crags, peeping out from amongst the purple heather, and wondrous looked the glass-like sea stretching out in its slumbering majesty towards the far-off western world.

Silence so intense, and, if I may be allowed the word, so all-absorbing, is comparatively rare in the light of day; and there was something almost

startling in the unnatural stillness and absence of life around us. There were as yet no sea-birds upon the wing, no cormorants flying low along the water in pursuit of their finny prey—not even a puffin airing his pinions for his long day's work. So quietly, indeed, was nature sleeping that when Bertha's footfall near, warned me that she at least had risen from her slumbers, there was a sort of cheerful comfort in the small sound she made. She looked so fresh and bright, too, that I forgot the expression of what I hoped was but a transient sorrow; and, as I instinctively called to mind her husband's panegyrics, and listened to her winning voice, I could well understand the blessing that was brought to one of Fairholme's sensitive temperament by a buoyant nature such as hers.

"What an idle world it is to-day," she said, after our morning greetings had been exchanged. "Not a bird or beast but seems inclined to lie a-bed; and even Job is sleeping, or he would be looking out as usual for the wind. But what is that?" she cried, with a sudden exclamation. "Oh, Mark, look there! I do believe it is a seal—that black round thing that is gliding towards us on the water."

I looked towards the vessel's stem, and there, sure enough, was the creature Bertha had named;

while, simultaneous almost with our discovery, there rose from the forecastle a prolonged and melodious whistle.

Bertha laid her finger on her lip.

"It's Mike," she whispered, "and he's calling for the seal. The harmless creatures love music dearly, and even Mike's whistle may entice it on towards us."

"They're easy enough to hit," I remarked, not noticing at the moment how interested my companion was in the animal itself, and forgetting the impossibility of her conniving at a plot for its destruction.

"They're easy enough to hit, but the difficulty is to bag them, they sink so directly. We must try and find one on the land;" and I raised the glass to my eye for a survey of the adjacent rocks.

"You wouldn't surely kill them!" exclaimed Bertha, in dismay; "you *couldn't* kill such an inoffensive creature! They do no harm. They do not, like Edward's eagle, feed on other beasts, and——"

"You are mistaken, Bertha," said a voice behind us, "for the seal, amiable as he looks, is anything but innocuous, as he feeds voraciously on other fish, especially on the salmon, and commits dreadful

havoc amongst the herring-nets. Still it seems a cruel act to kill him; and the more especially as the people have a superstitious feeling about the meek-eyed animals, and will always save them, if they can."

Edward, for it was he who had joined us, took the glass from me as he spoke, and fixed it on the round black head, which, after having disappeared several times, and for many minutes at a time, since we had first perceived it, was now visible at a distance of about fifty yards from the yacht.

" It has a little one, Bertha," he said to his wife; " a tiny little black fellow clinging to it. Take the glass, and look."

Mrs. Fairholme was delighted with the sight, as tender women generally are by anything young and helpless.

" The tiny darling," she cried—and then to me —" Oh Mark, are not you glad you did not shoot the mother? How unhappy it would have been, left alone!"

" Alone—alone, all, all alone;
Alone on a wide, wide sea;"

quoted Edward, in a low voice, and then added, turning to me,

" I daresay you never heard the strange idea that

these people entertain of a seal's inner nature. They imagine,—the fantastical mountaineers—that thousands of drowning beings, struggling for life on the rolling waters of the Deluge, perished hereabouts in the body, but that their souls entered into the amphibious animals,—of whom (by the way) I see, at this moment, no less than seven basking on the rock yonder in the morning sun."

It was quite true (I mean the presence of the unwieldly things upon the little peninsula), but Bertha's gentle influence, and Edward's account of the popular superstition, had extinguished in me, for the moment, the desire to slay, so we left them to their own enjoyments..

About twelve o'clock the wind sprung up suddenly —a good stiff breeze to the eastward,—and we lost no time, after tying one reef in the mainsail, in proceeding on our voyage.

Mike was again full of business, deeming it his duty to act (as before) the part of *Cicerone*, whilst we, amused at his anecdotes, and full of wondering admiration of a people who, if you give them but a pipe to smoke, and liberty to talk, have "the impudence to be happy," remained upon the deck enjoying the fresh sea breeze, and the vivid sunshine that gleamed from out the cloudless sky.

On we sped, past the sandy beach to which the wild waves careered right noisily, past the purple islands, over which the blue sky bent so brightly, and past the rocky, water-circled acre, where, according to the loquacious Mike, an old man lived alone, a godless life, and heaping up the silver which at his decease his distant kin would share.

"Bedad an it's hissel' as has the money," said Mike, as we dashed past the rock and heather covered island, standing solitary in that wilderness of sky and sea. "It isn't God or divil that ould Larry fears, but jist the loss of the gould he's got. They do be saying he's left orders afther him to be buried in his breeches, bekase of the money that's in it; bad *look* to him for that same."

"But how did he make his money?" I enquired.

"Fait, an' it wasn't trusting to one way it was at all, yer Honour; I'm thinking mysel' it's the lobsters most times when they was in it."

With so decidedly lucid an explanation of the mystery, we should have been exacting in the extreme had we not been satisfied; we therefore desisted from any further queries concerning the origin of "ould Larry's" reputed fortune.

During the five hours that elapsed whilst, without any determinate plan or object, we sailed about

and around the islands that are *strewed* near the ocean's limit, the wind had been anything but steady: only, as is usual on this unreliable location (where the wild and thundering waves are, as I once heard poetically remarked by a quick-witted Paddy while arguing with a disloyal cousin from America, the Armstrong guns which guard these shores), the breeze that blew in strong and fitful gusts was alternated by calms as sudden as they were unwished for.

It was during one of those silent lulls that Fairholme, while he reclined under the lee of the low bulwark, commenced talking to me of a friend who had been, like ourselves—only for a somewhat longer period—an inhabitant of these western solitudes.

"We will take a cruise and see old Gascoigne, after Tremlett's departure. He is to go next week. I was going to say, thank God! For I sometimes find myself forgetting that he is Bertha's brother, more shame for me!"

"But why not go before?" I asked, "why not sail to the Island to-day? The wind is fair, and old Job is willing, which is a great point. We should be there in two hours, and take our Robinson Crusoe by surprise."

"Impossible!" said Edward, imperatively. "He

and Tremlett are—I will not say at daggers drawn—but on those terms of civil mutual dislike which makes it to be desired that the sea should lie between them; and far be it from me to facilitate their meeting. The fact is," he added, after a few minutes' pause and seeming hesitation, "the fact is, that Gascoigne being an old friend and near neighbour, was a good deal at Westfield during the time of my poor mother-in-law's last illness. He was aware of the great influence which Mr. O'Donovan had obtained over her mind, and thought that Tremlett was very unjust in his suspicions of my young cousin, Cyril Vernon,—you remember him, don't you, Mark?"

"Only slightly; a little weak-looking fellow, was he not?"

"Very weak," said Fairholme, bitterly; "for he and his few thousands fell an easy prey to Mr. O'Donovan's zeal for proselytising, and his Church's greed of gain. But the story is a long, as well as a very painful one, so we will keep it for some quieter hour than this, and for a time when we shall be safer from the chance of interruption."

"But about Gascoigne?" I ventured to ask, although Fairholme seemed evidently rather disinclined to continue the conversation. "I see no

reason for *his* having quitted the world, and leading this Alexander Selkirk kind of life. He was engaged, if I mistake not, to young Vernon's sister——"

"Who went over to Rome, and is now a nun, not yet professed, but in the year of her novitiate, in a convent of an order the strictest and severest that exists. There never was so complete a wreck of family happiness as that which followed on the surging in amongst us of the fretful, ever-working breakers of Romish Catholicism, in the person of that sleek, dangerous, and ambitious Jesuit. But, my dear Mark, there are scenes connected with that period which I would rather banish from my memory while I have yet to meet my wife's brother face to face. He is a good man, I hope and believe, but he has little charity——"

"Plenty, I imagine," was my rejoinder, as I interrupted him with, I fear, scant ceremony; "plenty of that species of charity which is so apt both to begin and end 'at home.' I allude to that agreeable virtue when it teaches us to 'think no evil' of our own selves."

Fairholme made no reply to this sally, and it was perhaps a relief to both of us when Mike came aft with the announcement that we were over the best of all possible trawling grounds, and that it was

consequently advisable that the net should be got out without loss of time.

The old fisherman's hint was immediately taken, and sail having been shortened, the trawl was, with the help of all hands, save Bertha's, lowered from the deck. For about half an hour we sailed onwards with a light breeze following us, and then, having lain-to, we all (on the tiptoe of excitement) prepared for the hauling in of the net. It was rather a long business, for the trawl was large and heavy, added to which we had taken a good many weighty fish. Our victims were in agreeable variety, containing amongst their numbers a small but inviting-looking turbot; two "old maids," who grinned at us defiantly; several John Dorys, and soles of large dimensions. They lay upon the deck (greatly, as I fancied, to the disgust of the cleanly Job), and were mixed up with shells, full and empty, limpet-covered stones, and trailing seaweed.

We had all—with the exception, as before, of Bertha—lent our aid in hauling in the net; and for this purpose, and to protect our garments from the wet, our sleeves were turned up nearly to the elbow. The operation of disentangling the *prizes* from the rubbish was nearly concluded, when, chancing to turn my eyes towards Fairholme, I saw, to my

surprise, a mark as of a severe cut upon his arm. It had evidently been made by a long and jagged wound, and extending, as it did, from the elbow to the wrist, it presented, in its uneven line and reddish purple hue, a singular appearance.

I was about to make some remark on the curious character of the scar, when a movement of Bertha's checked me. She had noticed, perhaps, the direction of my eyes, for at once crossing the deck, she leant over her husband, and quietly drew down the sleeve, the position of which the excitement of the moment had probably induced him to overlook. Edward's cheek, as was so often customary with him, flushed visibly; and Tremlett, whose keen eyes nothing seemed to escape, looked almost significantly at his sister.

"Another mystery!" was my inward reflection, but I could not pursue the train of thought to which this little episode had given rise, for Tremlett, addressing his brother-in-law, inquired of him the name of a lighthouse that was visible through the glass.

"It is the one on Dunross headland. That high promontory you are looking at is on Deenish Island," answered Fairholme; and I fancied that there was in his words a tone approaching to defiance.

"That is where Gascoigne hid himself some time ago, is it not?" asked Tremlett, in whose manner there lurked a threat.

"The same; but, Oswald, so long a time has now elapsed since you have heard mention even of my friend's name, that it can scarcely be an effort to you to abstain from speaking of him, and we will therefore, if you please, pass by the spot in silence. See, you have already distressed poor Bertha, for you are turning a day of promised pleasure into one of painful memories, and are sorely embittering the last hours that we are to spend together. Mark!" he continued, turning to me, and speaking with a sudden change of tone, "think you that Job will let us now 'lie to' for dinner, as Bertha has been very provident, and will be disappointed if we do not appreciate her merits as a *cateress*."

Collett made no difficulty in acceding to Edward's proposal; and, to the satisfaction of all, our little voyage ended more cheerfully than at one time we had dared to anticipate.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SACRED REEK—THE WEDDING BREAKFAST—PRIESTLY ASSAULTS.

THREE days of heavy and continued rain, accompanied by a gale of wind which would hardly have been out of place in either of the Equinoxes, followed on the departure of the guest whose presence had added so little to our enjoyment: but on the fourth, notwithstanding the appearance simultaneously in the sky of three rainbows (an infallible sign, according to a certain weather-wise Dominick Moore, that from the "ind" of one of them a "loomp of ruin" would *surely* fall), we decided on setting at naught those gloomy prognostications, and on embarking in the "Humming Bird" for the Bay of Islands, with the intention of assisting at the great annual "station," and *Pathern*, about to be held on the base and summit of Old Croagh Patrick.

"Shure it's the greatest in all Ireland, your

Honour, and it's fourteen times I've been up the same, by the blessing o' God."

"What, on your hands and knees? Eh, Dominick?"

"No; but on me feet, your Honour, and fifteen times round the top o' the mountain, which is as good as an English mile aitch turn, and onst round to the altar on the hands and knees, and the stones very displazing an' cogglesome on me, saving your Honour's presence."

"Well, you're a great pilgrim entirely, Dominick; but now, tell me," I said, "were there many doing the same each time you were there?"

"Troth, and there were, your Honour; and hundreds, ay, and thousands, in it, and them saying their beads—men and women—for the honour o' God!"

"Did your priest send you there for penance?"

"Bedad, and he did not, your Honour. I went of my own head."

He was an excellent, simple-hearted creature, that same Dominick, a near "frind," too, of more than one "pillar of the church," but a very poor man withal. He had a strangely vacant and watery eye, and was said by some (and indeed he looked it) to be "a little light;" nevertheless, he was a great

scholar, and "had the Latin and the figures" at his fingers' ends.

I can see him before me now, with his bony face, large features, and huge *brazen* spectacles, the which were always placed upside down upon his nose, and fastened to the one button that still adorned his rusty coat by a long piece of packthread. There was in every—aye, even in the very poorest—cabin a welcome and a meal for harmless, learned, half-witted Dominick Moore, whose profession was that of parish clerk; whilst he eked out his precarious bachelor existence, by what he called the labours of "Esculapeeous," namely, the physicking and attending upon the various ailments of the four-footed, as well as of the human creation.

"Sharing, too, in the innumerable superstitions of those he pretends to heal," added Fairholme, "for —would you believe it, Mark?—there are numbers of the peasantry in this country who refuse to allow their children to be vaccinated, from an idea —deeply rooted, and one which we have striven in vain to combat—that the vaccine matter may possibly have been taken from Protestant subjects; and that in that case, the infant operated upon must become fatally and inveterately inoculated with the dreadful disease of heresy."

"How unutterably absurd," I remarked, laughing heartily at this instance of superstitious ignorance, "and at the same time what a melancholy proof of the virulent animosity occasioned by difference of creed. But, Fairholme, who do I see before us, on that outside car? Surely they are not nuns, in such a very unconcealing vehicle."

But in spite of my incredulity, and of the great improbability of such a display on the *pathern*-day, nuns they were, sure enough. Two of them seated side by side, with their black serge garments folded closely round them, and with one hand over their eyes, whilst the other held the heavy cross and beads. A thin, tall priest very ineffectually balanced the good sisters on the off-side of the car, and the whole party was enveloped in what is very rare in this country—namely, a cloud of dust.

"I believe one of those Sisters of Mercy to be foremost amongst the best women in the world," said Bertha, when the car was out of sight. "The good that she, and the nuns of her order, do amongst the poor, is incalculable; and she—Sister Mary, I mean—is so warm-hearted, so meek, so charitable, in the best sense of the word, that I often long to make her known to some at home who condemn and loathe so bitterly, and so indis-

criminately, the entire sworn sisterhood of the Church of Rome."

"They are wonderfully cheerful too," continued Edward, "at least on their show days; although one cannot but fear (for, after all, they are human, poor things,) that they must have their hours of sore struggle with the weak flesh, and many a moment of depression and weariness of spirit."

By the time that Fairholme had concluded his surmise regarding the possible weaknesses of the excellent Sisters of Mercy, we had reached our little quay; but as we put off to the cutter, he continued the subject by narrating rather an amusing morning (inapplicable as the term may seem) which he and his wife had once spent in the convent.

"It was on the occasion of the profession of a rather rich young lady, whose year of novitiate had expired, and who was on that day to become the bride of the church, and dedicate herself to its service. The ceremony was appointed to take place at nine o'clock in the morning, and a great dignitary—no less a person than John of Tuam—was to officiate on the occasion. So the wedding, for in the light of that generally considered joyous ceremony the nuns seemed to consider the ritual, was to be a grand affair of its kind. So many

people have seen, and so many have described the taking of the veil by a poor, deluded girl, that I shall say nothing about that portion of the morning's programme. The chapel was beautifully decked with flowers, the priests looked very imposing in their lace and their crosses, their yellow damask and their tonsured crowns—the organ pealed forth its inspiring tones, and the nuns all behaved with solemn and uniform decorum, save one, and she—but maybe she had some private cause for sorrow—bedewed her open prayer-book with her silently-falling tears during the entire period of the ceremony, which lasted, I think, about two hours, and was witnessed by as large a company as the place would contain.

When it was over we were invited to go up-stairs to the *déjeûner*, which was served in the refectory, and a very excellent wedding breakfast it was, to which from fifty to sixty guests of both sexes sat down, whilst the nuns (it was a great day for them) moved with their slow stealthy steps and trailing garments about the room, attending to the wants of their guests, and, I should imagine, greatly enjoying the unwonted dissipation. The priests mustered strong on the occasion, and Bertha, who sat between the Dean and an agreeable Jesuit, could tell

you how pleasant they made themselves, and how hospitably they helped to do the honours of the entertainment."

"Yes, it really was great fun," said Bertha, "though it seems almost wicked to say so; for the Dean was wonderfully jolly, and amusing. I think he would have sung a song if any one had asked him—and cautioned me so quaintly not to drink the convent Port—quite in a whisper though, as if he were afraid the nuns would hear him say that their bad wine would poison me. But the cutting of the cake entertained me most of anything—a wedding cake! Really though, it is shocking to think of their carrying out the simile even to such small details."

"Yes," agreed Fairholme. "It is shocking when throughout the service we are told, in terms which always appear to me almost blasphemous, whose bride the young girl has become. But nevertheless, there the cake was, a well-iced cake from Dublin, with orange flowers, and all the usual devices, and a small figure of a nun quivering on a silvered spiral wire at the top!"

"It was very hard to cut though," said Bertha, "or the convent knives were not sharp, for the Dean, on whom the duty devolved of making an incision into it, almost gave up the attempt in

despair. 'Sure I'm not used to doing it at all,' he said at last; and then looking round at the assembled nuns, he added benignly—'and it isn't any wish of mine to see this sort of a wedding. Sure I'd be far better plazed to see ye with a good husband a-piece now.'"

"The sisters didn't blush—any one of them," said Edward, "but there was a general cry of 'Ah! now, *Dane*,' which spoke volumes, and then in an aside to Bertha, the Reverend Mother remarked, by way, I conclude, of apology, 'The *Dane* does anything he likes here.' Poor old man! He was gathered to his fathers some months ago, and the poor have lost a good friend, and the 'Priests' party' an able and a zealous supporter."

The scene at the Pathern was as curious a one as I have ever witnessed. It was a fine clear day, but with a fresh breeze blowing from the west, so that the small white sails which careered along the waters of the bay were dipped into the crested waves as the skiffs bore their human freights to the scene of religious entertainment. There must have been many hundreds present, of all ages, and of both sexes. A few (comparatively speaking) of what are called the upper classes mixed occasionally in the crowd, and the middle ranks were well repre-

sented. Not a few, too, of decently and warmly clad peasants of the degree denominated *snug* were scattered about—the men in their frieze coats, tall hats and high white shirt-collars, and the women dressed in shawls of gaudy coloured tartan, over their cotton gowns. The matrons' heads were covered with thick much-befrilled cottonish-looking caps, whilst those of the unmarried girls were adorned solely with the profuse gift of their often sunburnt hair, the which appeared in most instances as though *it* and a brush or comb had yet to make acquaintance.

"Yes, there are a few who look tolerably well to do;" said Edward, in answer to a remark of mine touching the decent clothing of some of the assistants at the fête. "Yes, there certainly are a few who do not look as if they were to be pitied; but take another and a more attentive survey, and let us mix more with the crowd, after which I imagine you will agree with me, that the miserable ones here present, are greatly in the majority."

I did as I was bid, and soon saw ample cause to justify my friend's remark, for such a number of half-starved, hollow-eyed, yellow-skinned objects, I never before beheld together, and earnestly trust never to see again.

"And yet this is the harvest time," I said, "the season when the potatoes are generally the most plentiful, and—"

"But they were lately so destitute of the means of existence," put in Edward, "that they were forced to dig their potatoes in June. Then the strong winds broke the stalks, and the continued rains rotted them in the ground. They had no money to pay the rent, so they sold the cow, and the pig, and now, God help them, they have nothing before them but the prospect of starvation."

It was a melancholy picture, but alas! not an overcharged one, as we had ample means of ascertaining.

"They will drag on this year," said an intelligent Scotchman of the upper farmer class. "But *next year will be a famine year*, with only this improvement on the '47 one, that there are fewer poor wretches to suffer and to die!"

"They will have help, let us hope, from England," suggested Fairholme.

"They will not," said the farmer; "England will say that they do not deserve to be helped, because in some parts of the country rich men have been sacrificed to the rage of a starving and exasperated peasantry."

"But such crimes are unknown in this part of the country?"

"Exactly; a more harmless, patient race do not exist; but for the few *un*righteous, comparatively, that are in the land, a whole people are to be left unaided in their hunger and their nakedness."

"In my opinion," I remarked, "although I can hardly venture to give one on such a subject,—but in my opinion, a subscription throughout England to enable the Irish small tenantry to emigrate to America or Australia, would be the best form that charity to these poor creatures could take."

"I quite agree with you," said Fairholme; "but in this case, as in every other, England would find her design hindered by the priests. If the people could but be made to understand that the influence of their clergy, by encouraging the people to discontent, and therefore to the commission of crime, often prevents concessions from the landlords, and aid in various shapes from England, much would be effected for the good of these wretched people."

"Is their influence declining, think you?" was my next question of the farmer.

"In many ways, I am happy to say it is, and that the peasantry are not, as a mass, led so blindly by the

priests as was the case some years ago. They often now resist his tyrannical commands, and on a late occasion there was something very like a turn-up fight between a reverend father and one of his flock. The priest struck the man because he refused to pay his fee, and the man returned the blow, an act which, a few years ago, would have excited a degree of wonder and horror which is far from being the case at the present time. The class of gentlemen, however," continued the farmer, "who come converting and bribing, do an immense deal of harm."

"They certainly do not possess the means of doing good," said Edward; "while, as we have so often said, the Established Church is represented by an overpaid and generally idle body of men, who indulge in the luxury of wives and children, at which the hard-working and necessarily lonely priests scowl with envy and hatred as they pass them by."

"For which cause, if for no other," I said, "it would be infinitely better to come amongst this Roman Catholic population with the wish rather to smoke the calumet of peace, than to wave before them the banner of defiance. Times are, however, changed since the days when the Protestant

minister 'obliged' the priest, his neighbour, with the grazing of a cow, receiving from the latter, in return, the use of the chapel floor for the thrashing of his corn!"

"Yes," said Edward, "the days of good-will between those ministers of God's word whose creeds are different, has indeed gone by, and this is not only to be attributed to that terrible polemical malevolence—if I may use the word—which has roused men's fiercest passions since the world began; but because of the changed character of the priests themselves. I must not allow you, however, to mistake my meaning, or to imagine that I accuse the priests of any sins of immorality, or other glaring offences. On the contrary, I believe that their influence on the *moral* conduct of the people is in some respects excellent; and that there is considerable danger in removing some of the barriers which they place in the way of the grosser sins. 'Men who have ceased to reverence,' are in grievous peril of becoming slack in their religious duties; and the peasants *do* reverence both their priesthood and the creed they teach them."

"Besides," I suggested, "it is such a comfortable religion, that we can scarcely wonder at their preferring it to our colder creed. It is like an Irish

welcome, — his far-famed *Cead mille failthe.* Most pleasant indeed if one could only believe in it!"

"Added to which," said Fairholme, "it is a *persecuted* faith, which, with a people such as these, is not without its weight. But to return to what I was about to say regarding the altered character of the priesthood generally. In the first place they are, as a general rule, no longer liberally educated gentlemen, but are belonging, in almost every instance, to the peasant class; very poor they are also, and it is therefore to their interest that the people should remain religiously unenlightened. But for some of these evils have we not ourselves to blame? And when we look back to the various edicts, in days gone by, against a class who might, under a different rule, have become (even as the whole Irish people) useful citizens, and England's friends; we can scarcely wonder that they should have turned to enemies, and that the evils brought upon the land should be almost incalculable! Let me cite one instance alone of misguided tyranny, as exemplified in a law promulgated in the reign of William and Mary. That law ordered all popish persons exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and all priests not then actually in parishes and to be regis-

tered, to be banished the kingdom; and if they should return from exile, to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. Twenty pounds reward is given for apprehending them, and heavy penalties for harbouring and concealing them. As all the priests then in being and registered are long since dead, and as these laws are made perpetual, every popish priest is liable to the law. It may seem absurd to rake up in these days so old a grievance, but the *spirit* in which such laws were made remains unchanged, and if it be thus true that to the English is owing in part the present religious ignorance of the people, does it not behove us to bestir ourselves to the utmost to undo the evil that we have caused? Should we not also feel that it is our duty to deal tenderly with those who suffer in consequence of our fault, and also with a system which (I repeat) it would be well for us in some respects to copy? Is there no 'beauty,' I ask you, and no 'praise,' in a religion which brings forth even amidst its darkness some excellent fruits? Look at their deeds of mercy—glance at the obedience of the people who, even if starving, would not desecrate their Friday's fast, nor earn wages, however needed, during the fifty *yearly* holidays, besides Sundays, which their church commands them to respect; and tell me whether we

should altogether condemn such a faith as worthless, and such a profession as hypocrisy?"

"These missionaries seem to think," said I, after a pause, "that, like the apostles of old, a miracle will follow upon their teaching, because of its violence and vituperation; whereas they should, I imagine, proceed after the fashion of those who are known to be the most easily understood, and the most willingly listened to by the 'deaf'—namely, they should utter their words slowly and distinctly, after a due weighing of the truths they utter."

"Exactly," pursued Edward; "and for that reason one of my first steps should be to abolish the class of Scripture readers altogether, from the conviction that, as a body, they are the very last individuals in the world who should be intrusted with the delicate work that is given them to do. And now, having in part replied to your question, I cannot forbear to lay considerable stress upon the advantage to be gained by all classes from furthering the work of emigration. On the soil of his native country an Irishman is nothing, *does* nothing, and is worth nothing. In distant lands he will meet with priests of his own faith more liberal and better educated—men who will not withhold from him the right of free election, but will permit

him to decide for himself on the all-important matters of his soul's salvation. It is little *I* can do," continued my friend, in a lower and still sadder tone, "to convince the rich *religious* world that it is *their* supineness which is in some measure the cause of Irish crimes. It is not in my limited power to make my voice heard in this weighty cause; but when *I* am far away, dear Mark, will you make known the truth that to these people, who are indeed 'sitting in darkness,' no *real* light can shine till the lamp is more fully fed with the oil that heals the wounds of strife and bitterness? Say aloud that the first work of Bible Christians is *at home*, and that now is the time, while famine is staring the Irish Papists in the face, and fever is knocking at their doors, to come with English money and with English *love* (a gift that will be new indeed to Celtic hearts), and snatch them from the power of those whose own necessities react so fearfully on their misguided flocks."

Fairholme paused as though breathless; and, as he buried his face between his hands, I could feel that he was praying silently.

After awhile he rose, and, asking my pardon for his warmth and the lengthened disquisition he had indulged in, proposed that we should seek some rest.

The morning light was beginning to streak the eastern sky with grey when we left the deck; but it was long ere I could sleep, for Edward's words, and, above all, his saddened countenance, haunted my wakeful hours.

CHAPTER IX.

FATHER O'DONOVAN—STRONG MEASURES—CUTTING OUT.

"How is the wind this morning, Navan?" was my first inquiry on the unusually bright-looking morning which we had fixed on for our sail to Deenish Island.

"*Aist*, your Honour," replied Con, looking round the sky, and evidently considering from which point of the compass it would be "most plazing" to my "Honour" that it should blow.

"Shall we have rain, do you think, to-day?" was my next query.

"We shall not, your Honour," replied old Dominick, who came sauntering up at the moment, with his vacant eyes blinking in the morning sunlight, like those of the would-be wise owl, whom in countenance he not a little resembled. "We shall not, your Honour, by the blessing of God!"

"How many fine days now, Dominick, do you

reckon that you get out of the three hundred and sixty five?"

"Bedad, then, and its not to say too many, your Honour. Sure, I kept a *dairy* onst in the head of it mysel', but it had me bet out enthirely; for it's soft weather it was the summer through, and the pratees were rotted in the ground, saving your Honour's presence, and the turf melting in the bog, till sorra a bit of firing was there for a poor man to get the year."

"Then you think the people are very badly off this year?"

"Troth, and they are, your Honour. Shure the money isn't it at all. They haven't a baste, let alone the crop. But shure it's the will o' God to send the rain and the three bad saisens afther; and the boys do be going off to America to get the living shurely, laving the wife and childre afther 'em, the crathurs!"

It was the old story, and while Dominick was doling it out he was standing idly on the little quay, and still holding forth on the woes and wants of his countrymen, when we stepped into the dingy, and were rowed to the cutter, which lay at her moorings in the bay.

As I sat opposite to my friend in the boat, I could not but notice the careworn, anxious look upon his

face, and I wondered, whilst thus sadly occupied, what could have occurred during our two years of separation (caused by my lengthened stay in another hemisphere) to impress such marks of age upon his thoughtful brow.

"To-day perhaps he will remember his promise," was my inward hope, "and reveal to me the circumstances in which the history of the young Vernons, and the mutual friend we are about to visit, seem to be so curiously mixed up. I will not press him to discuss the subject, but if anything should lead to its renewal, I shall deem myself fortunate, since it might be 'awkward,' when in company with our self-banished friend, not to know something of his previous story as connected with Tremlett and the Fairholmes."

I had made up my mind to the exercise of the amount of self-denial required to subdue any outward appearance of curiosity, and was listlessly gazing over the weather side of the "Humming Bird" as she careered over the waters of the bay, when I was rewarded for my mental effort by Edward's voice saying, as he leant over the bulwark by my side—

"Have you forgotten my promise, Mark, or rather the proposal which I made you to relate the

apparently mysterious circumstances attending on my *almost* quarrel with my wife's brother?"

"Indeed I have not," was my reply; "and but for fear of being thought inquisitive, as well as importunate, I should ere this have reminded you of a promise which I consider in the light of an especial act of friendship."

Fairholme drew a long breath, and seemed for a moment as though collecting his energies for a painful effort; after which evidently rather difficult exertion of self-control, he spoke as follows:—

"You say you remember my cousin, Cyril Vernon; but as you saw him, if I remember right, but once, you can hardly form to yourself a correct idea of what he was, when nearly two years had elapsed after what may almost be called the transient glimpse you had of him."

"He was a beautiful boy," I said. "*That* I remember well. A boy with soft blue eyes, liquid and tender as a woman's, and with fair curls that——"

"Ah! I see you have not forgotten him," interrupted Fairholme, rather impatiently. "Well, Mark, such as you describe him, only infinitely more attractive, was Cyril Vernon when I first became acquainted with my Bertha's, and Oswald

Tremlett's mother. You are perhaps not aware that the principal portion of the wealthy Mrs. Tremlett's property was in her own power, and that she was, at the time I mention, a rather handsome, not overwise, and very enthusiastically inclined lady, of a little past forty years of age."

"You are speaking," I asked, "of the year when you took possession of your pretty place in Devonshire?"

"Exactly; and when Vernon, with his father and sister, paid me a visit at Okecliff, which was situated within a mile of Mrs. Tremlett's residence. Young Vernon had at that time just left a very High Church school, and had become strongly imbued with what I considered to be dangerously Papistical opinions."

"But he was almost a child at the period I allude to, and surely it would have been no difficult task to root out the evil before it had gained any important hold upon his mind."

"Easy enough such a duty *might* have been, as you justly remark, had there not been a Roman Catholic agent in the neighbourhood who soon made the task impossible."

"You allude to Mr. O'Donovan?"

"I do—to the Jesuit priest, than whom a wilier

man, and one more fitted for his work, never received his credentials from the unceasingly active head-quarters of his Church. The manner of his attack, if attack it could be called, was conducted under a system of tactics which had evidently been laid down by a master hand, and was pursued by a pupil who was by no means at his first essay in carrying out the design which had been entrusted to him."

"He was a very agreeable man, and appeared to have lived much in the world," I remarked.

"Which was the case; for he had not entered the priesthood till he had arrived at the age of thirty, and his worldly knowledge, and especially the experience which a man so handsome and fascinating could not have failed to obtain during his intercourse, as a layman, with his fellow-beings, stood him in good stead in his new and arduous avocation. Then, too," continued Fairholme, after a pause, "everything seemed to favour his projects, and render more easy the task which his Church had commanded him to perform. The father of the proposed victims was a weak-minded and helpless invalid, who was far too much engrossed by the care of his own health to have either leisure or inclination to dwell upon the dangers which threatened the

well-being of his children. He died—you recollect my poor uncle's death?—a few weeks only after his removal to Torquay, and there can be no doubt that the impression left upon the minds of Eva and her brother by a death-bed scene which was peculiarly painful in its character, was very great and lasting."

"Did you see them often at that period?"

"I did; but, to my shame, perceived positively nothing that was going on. How could I? I was in love—you know what that means, Mark—and every feeling of my heart, and all my powers of observation, were engrossed by Bertha Tremlett—the idol of my fancy then, the faithful sharer of my joys and sorrows now. Ours was a singular courtship," continued Fairholme, "nothing joyous or youthful in it, for a shadow of some coming evil seemed to hover above the house, and Father O'Donovan (Mrs. Tremlett had always called him 'Father') did not succeed by his false smiling face in lighting up the gloom. It was wonderful what power he so soon obtained over that frivolous woman's character. I believe he used to terrify her by working on her nervous fancies, till he at last succeeded in persuading her that in his religion alone there was power to comfort and to save."

"But had Bertha—had Mrs. Tremlett's daughter—no misgivings as to the designs of Father O'Donovan? And where was Tremlett? Surely *he*, with his evidently strong prejudices against the Roman Catholic faith, must have had some idea of what was going on, and should have interfered between his belongings and the priest."

"He had no such prejudices then, for they are in great measure born of the miserable events which followed on Mr. O'Donovan's intimacy with his family. Besides, Oswald was very little at Westfield during that memorable time; and the priest, to do him and his zeal for his Church justice, did not, as the saying is, let the grass grow under his feet. I must, however, hurry on to the *dénouement*, a portion of which you are already cognizant of, for if I mistake not, Mrs. Tremlett's conversion to the Roman Catholic religion, through the means of O'Donovan and my cousin Cyril, is no secret to you."

"Through the means of your cousin Cyril!" I repeated, in amazement. "Why, how could that boy—that child almost—have played a prominent part in that dark drama?"

"He was no child," said Edward, sternly, "but, as I have said before, a young man, gifted with

extraordinary beauty of person, and with a charm of voice and manner singularly winning. Mrs. Tremlett, too, as we are all aware, was vain of her person, excitable, and fond of admiration, so—but enough upon that hateful topic.—Cyril was the tool and convert of O'Donovan, and his accomplice, I grieve to say—is it not a hateful word?—in the frauds (as Oswald denominates them) which preceded Mrs. Tremlett's death. After the latter's public profession of faith, both Bertha and I endeavoured, by every means in our power, to mark our condemnation of the man who had lured, for the enrichment of his Church and his own advancement therein, those weak vessels to their ruin. He could not but see our aim; but, after all, what mattered to him a displeasure which he did not seem even to notice, so invariably courteous and submissive was he in his manner to us both. They had a strong party, too, in the house, those Papists, for Eva and Cyril had, unknown to us, gone, as it is called, over to Rome almost immediately after their father's death; and they were now living openly as converts under Mrs. Tremlett's roof."

"And when, and how was the announcement of these sad events first made to Oswald Tremlett?"

"As to the 'by whom,' I know not, but we sus-

pected that some friend at home must have written to warn him that there was danger in the wind. Oswald was yachting at that time with a pleasant party in the Mediterranean, woodcock-shooting in Sardinia, and in other ways enjoying himself; otherwise I have little doubt that he would have returned to England at the slightest mention of the danger which threatened his inheritance. As it was, however, he contented himself with writing, in an extremely angry letter to his sister, a solemn warning, which filled the poor girl's mind with consternation, for she had always feared more than she had loved her often absent brother. To both Mrs. Tremlett and me she confided the contents of that ill-judged epistle. That she did so, was perhaps a mistake; but who can wonder that she made it? The secret was too weighty for her to bear alone, and she shrunk from the responsibility of carrying out unaided the wishes expressed in Oswald's letter. From the moment when Mrs. Tremlett was made acquainted with her son's suspicions, all was misery at Westfield. To describe the mental struggles of the unhappy woman would be impossible, distracted as she was between her love for, and sense of duty to her children, and the direful threatenings of O'Donovan should she swerve in her allegiance to

the Church. Nor was poor Bertha much less to be pitied; for what with the pain it caused her to remonstrate with her mother, whose internal conflicts were rapidly developing the mortal disease under which she had long been labouring—and what with her fear of her brother's displeasure, she had a weary time of it."

"And about the young Vernons?" I asked. "Did they remain (in appearance at least) passive during that memorable time?"

"Certainly not, for Eva, as well as her brother, often gave me serious cause for uneasiness concerning them. Major Gascoigne's regiment was at that time quartered at Exeter, and it is no exaggeration to say that he soon became 'desperately in love' with my young cousin. At the time the attachment commenced, Gascoigne was ignorant of the fact that Eva had abjured the faith which *he* professed, and believed to be the only true one. It was not long, however, before he discovered what had occurred, and his love, now strengthened into passion, had taken so firm a hold upon him, that the idea of giving up the hope of making Eva his wife never for a moment seemed to enter his imagination. As for the poor girl herself, she, as was very natural, surrendered her whole being, except her conscience,

to her lover. *That*, alas! was in the keeping of the priest, and in obedience to *his* command, she, after the engagement between them had been sanctioned by Gascoigne's father, broke off a marriage on which his happiness depended, and with a breaking heart betook herself to the convent in Belgium, where in a few weeks her year of novitiate will be over, and her living death will be announced."

"And all this contrary to the dictates of her own feelings, and, as I conclude, in defiance of her lover's prayers! Heavens! what power the priests of that religion gain, and with what remorseless hands they exercise it!"

"The power is, as you remark, immense, and the remorse *nil*, or stifled by their own fears of 'the Church,' which, by the way, does not often instruct her emissaries to take such exceeding trouble except in cases where substantial benefit is to be gained for the 'Holy Mother.' But to return to the distracted family at Westfield, and especially to Cyril, whose state of mind while his sister's engagement was in process of being broken off, was evidently most unhappy. He had been very intimate with Gascoigne before the latter's introduction by him to Mrs. Tremlett's family; and many had been the small kindnesses conferred by

the older friend on the boy, who at that time lived alone with his querulous and invalid father, and had but few opportunities of enjoying any of the pleasures in which lads of his age are in the habit of indulging. It followed as a matter of course (for Cyril's nature was clinging and affectionate in an almost womanly degree), that he attached himself sincerely to the friend who, as you and I both know full well, possesses so many of the qualities which entitle a man both to respect and affection."

"And that being the case, he must have rejoiced greatly in the prospect of a marriage which was likely to insure his sister's happiness, and convert his friend into a brother."

"Exactly. Nor shall I easily forget the brightening of his whole face and manner when Philip Gascoigne shook him by the hand, and said, 'Cyril, dear old fellow, congratulate me, for your darling sister has promised to be my wife, and we shall be one happy family together.' And we *were* happy. For one short week, during which O'Donovan was absent from the neighbourhood, our evil genius seemed to have departed. Eva's smile was as bright, and almost as frequent, as my Bertha's; and Cyril's beautiful tenor voice—you remember what a gift he had—was again heard in snatches of song about

the house, or in Mrs. Tremlett's morning room, where, on her invalid's sofa, she dozed away, under the influence of narcotics, a great portion of the summer days."

"I can well understand how pleasant it must have been; and in that lovely place, too, under those glorious elms. Two pairs of lovers, and——"

"Ah, well, it had its drawbacks even during that happy week," said Fairholme, with a sigh; "for we could not quite forget that relief from our incubus was only momentary; whilst I, to my infinite distress, was becoming daily more convinced of the fact that the unnatural austerities and the penances imposed by the Church upon my poor weakly cousin (who, I forgot to tell you, was doomed to the priesthood), were working sad havoc in his excitable brain and delicately-strung nerves."

"You do not mean to say that you feared his reason was giving way under the pressure that was laid upon it?"

"I hardly know what I thought, or what I feared. But, Mark, believe me, that if there be a horrible situation in life, it is when you feel compelled to watch the movements of a fellow-being as you would those of an animal who *might* be dangerous. And yet in this case I could scarcely have given a rational

reason for the vague alarm that I was feeling. Cyril's words and actions were, to casual observers, not tinged by any appearance of eccentricity; but still a nameless fear regarding his sanity oppressed me; and although to no human being did I hint my suspicions regarding my poor mother's sister's child, I was ever, as I said before, watching his expressions and his doings furtively. It was in the midst of this fresh cause for anxiety that O'Donovan returned, and on the very next morning the blow was struck which shattered poor Eva's hopes of earthly happiness for ever. I am not about to describe the scenes which followed, or to depict poor Gascoigne's sorrow, which was, indeed, but little manifest to the world, for he evinced great powers of self-control, and was considerably aided in his efforts by the very natural indignation with which the conduct of his affianced bride inspired him. He has been softened towards her since, poor fellow! but the blow was too sudden and too keen, and at first he thought but of himself."

"Poor fellow, indeed! And now he is living in solitude on that desolate island! What a hermit-like existence."

"Not quite that, as you will acknowledge when you see him; for Gascoigne, who has left the army,

is extremely fond of wild sports; added to which he has been employing his lonely hours in studying all that can be said both for and against the faith which his poor lost Eva has embraced, and——"

"But you do not think that there is any chance of his going over to Rome? Surely, it is not in *this* country, and with such examples as he must see before him, that converts of his calibre of mind and education are likely to be made."

"Heaven knows," replied Edward, sadly. "I would answer for no one whose mind was weakened by sorrow or by solitude, or where the dread was felt that by persevering in a different faith, the mourner for a lost one would lessen his chances of meeting in another state of existence the object of his affections. Well, poor Gascoigne left Westfield in outward anger, but with something very like despair tugging at his heartstrings, and a few days afterwards, and whilst we—that is, Bertha, and I who could not see unmoved the signs of sorrow on her poor pale face—were endeavouring to impress upon Cyril the necessity of procuring for his sister a change of scene which might restore to her pale cheeks some of the faint beautiful colour she had lost,—I say, whilst we were thus occupied in projects for the poor girl's benefit, a letter to the

following effect was received by Bertha from Oswald Tremlett. 'It gives me great cause for regret, my dear Bertha,' he wrote, 'and forgive me if I add *displeasure*, to find that you are so entirely engrossed by your *own* present happiness, and with your *own* prospects for the future, that you are forgetting the interests of your family, and giving free scope for the success of the schemes which that designing priest, who seems, from what I hear, to have almost taken up his abode at Westfield, has formed. But greatly as *you* appear to be neglecting the requests I have made you in this matter, I have fortunately *other* friends in the county who are less lukewarm, and from *their* information I can gather that my *speedy* return is necessary to prevent serious inroads being made upon my mother's property. Of course it is extremely painful to me to allude to so delicate a subject as my mother's will, but necessity obliges me to entreat that till my return, which will be shortly after your receipt of this letter, you must prevent the priest, or *any* of his *myrmidons*, having access to your mother. You cannot be too much on your guard, and above all, keep your eye upon the Vernons.' This was the letter, which with flushed cheeks, and I am sure a painfully beating heart, poor Bertha brought to me the instant that she received

it. Perhaps a short reflection would have induced her to conceal at least that portion of it in which allusion was made to my relatives; but she was evidently too agitated to be cautious, so I had the *satisfaction* of reading the whole bitter, underlined, and angry effusion.

"'Is it not cruel?' said Bertha, in whose eyes the tears were brimming. 'Too cruel to wish me to torment my mother when she is ill; and I cannot believe,' she went on to say, 'that Mr. O'Donovan can really be so wicked, so grasping, as to take advantage of Oswald's absence and mamma's illness to—to defraud "us."' I confess that I did not share Bertha's confidence in the priest's singleness of purpose; but one of the arguments which she used to induce me to interfere in the matter, had certainly the effect of increasing my unwillingness to assist in subverting O'Donovan's schemes. For if it were true that he was working on Mrs. Tremlett's nerves and religious belief to induce her to make a will in favour of the Church, it ill became me, at least I considered so, to take an active part in saving the fortune of my future wife from the clutches of the despoiler. On the other hand, my own cousin was to all appearance working with the enemy; and I was hesitating between the several courses to pur-

sue, when a station *fly* drove to the door, and we saw alight from it a gentleman clad in rather rusty black, whom Bertha at once recognised as having seen, a few days previously, walking in a secluded part of the grounds in company with Mr. O'Donovan. 'Oh, Edward,' she exclaimed, with sudden energy, 'they are coming to torment mamma, I am certain that they are, from some expressions she let fall to-day: and she has been so excited, and so suffering since, that I feel convinced it is something about *money*. It was always the case when Oswald was at home, and talked what he calls business with my poor mother, that she was for hours, and sometimes days, before she recovered from the effects of the interview.'"

"Our friend Tremlett seems to have shown some early uneasiness concerning his mother's disposal of her property," I remarked.

"It would appear so, but of course the subject was not one that could well be discussed between Bertha and me, which being the case, I endeavoured to persuade her (and at last with success), to go to her mother's morning room, and await the coming of the enemy, promising that I would attend her summons instantly, should she deem my presence either useful or advisable. An hour, or nearly so,

elapsed, and as I heard nothing of the intruder, I began to hope that Bertha had been mistaken in her surmises, and that the shabby individual in black was a harmless specimen of his species. I was signally wrong, however, as the event will prove. Six o'clock had sounded, and the great stable-bell had rung out its notice that work for the day was over, when in the midst of the profound silence which followed, I was startled by the sharp voice of Bertha's maid, requesting me to go immediately to Mrs. Tremlett's room; and adding that her young lady had been taken with a fainting fit. In considerable alarm I followed her up-stairs, and into the boudoir from which there escaped a strong odour of æther. On the sofa, and supported by pillows, reclined the death-like figure of Mrs. Tremlett, by whose side sat Father O'Donovan, while the shabby-genteel man in black stood at a few paces' distance. Cyril, too, was present, but he was half hidden by the window curtains, which fell at the back of the couch, where he had ensconced himself. I glanced round for Bertha, and was half-relieved and half-alarmed to find that she was absent. On my entrance O'Donovan looked up in surprise and evident displeasure, a feeling which was doubtless not decreased by the expression of relief which stole

over Mrs. Tremlett's pain-worn face, as she dropped the pen she had been holding between her feeble fingers, and held her thin hand towards me in greeting.

"'Mrs. Tremlett is very particularly engaged,' said the priest, 'on a matter of earnest import, one in which her soul's welfare is implicated; and as you, Mr. Fairholme, are not, unhappily, of our faith, you will, I hope, take no offence when I remark that your presence at this moment is undesirable.'

"Whilst O'Donovan was speaking, I had glanced at the open sheet of parchment, and on it I saw, as plainly as though I had read the syllables inscribed, the solemn words, 'Last will and testament.'

"'Mrs. Tremlett!' I exclaimed; and I fear my tones were louder, and my manner scarcely so composed, as in a sick-room they should have been. 'Mrs. Tremlett—what is this? Have you forgotten that your children are almost entirely dependent upon you? Have you forgotten that your son is absent, but that he will soon be here to exact an account of the property committed by his father to your stewardship?'

"The words had no sooner left my lips, than I regretted having uttered them, for the sick woman

was seized with so violent a fit of trembling, that I was induced, in my great alarm, to hasten towards the bell, and summon those who might be able to render her assistance. Of what followed on that movement I can give no distinct account, so rapid and unexpected were the consequences of my indiscretion. There was a sudden and a simultaneous advance towards me of the two men—that I can distinctly remember—whilst from behind me a thick white cloth was hurriedly pushed against and pressed upon my face—my head swam, and my eyesight became obscured—the last circumstance which I can recollect being a sharp pain along my right arm, after which all was a blank."

"How strange," I exclaimed. "It hardly seems credible that such things could happen in a civilised country, and in the nineteenth century, when wonders are supposed to have ceased."

"*Supposed*, indeed!" said Fairholme, with a melancholy smile; "for, in my opinion, the very contrary is the case; since horrors and acts of treachery have grown so common, that they cease to excite the *wonder* which, in former days, would have followed on such acts. Of the events immediately following, and of all that passed during a serious illness consequent on my useless inter-

ference in the cause of Mrs. Tremlett's children, I can of course only speak from hearsay. When I recovered from a brain fever—which had been, so the doctors said, the result of concussion of the brain occasioned by a fall—I found myself in one of the Westfield bedrooms, and, as you may imagine, well and kindly cared for. My first visitor was Oswald Tremlett, dressed in deep mourning; and the earliest news I heard was, that Mrs. Tremlett was dead, and that the estate of Westfield had passed into the hands of Cyril Vernon, to whom the infatuated woman had bequeathed that, as well as every farthing of her personal property."

"Then what has Tremlett to exist upon?" I demanded, after I had expressed some of the regret and astonishment with which this announcement filled me.

"Only a small property of the value of a few hundreds a year, which a relation of his father's had left to him. And you may imagine his just and bitter anger against those who had defrauded him of his birthright. His intention was from the first to institute law proceedings against both O'Donovan and my cousin, and it is only by *my* entreaties that a short delay in the carrying out of this project has been obtained. To me the exposure of that weak,

infatuated young man would be most painful; and I cannot abandon a hope that by other means than a law-suit, reparation may be made. It is in the furtherance of this object that I am here, for I had at one time traced Father O'Donovan and his companion to Ireland; and my object is, as I think I need not tell you, to procure an interview with Cyril Vernon."

"And do you still consider it likely that he may be in one of the Convents in this country?"

"I do; although Oswald still persists in a belief that both the priest and young Vernon are in America—in a Convent in Baltimore. So assured is he, from information he has received, of this *fact*, that he will hear of nothing but my crossing the Atlantic, and pursuing the search in that direction; and it will only be by complying with this desire, that I shall obtain a further delay of the exposure which I dread."

"I see now," I said, after a short and painful pause, "the reason for your long stay in this country, and also the cause of your wife's melancholy when she spoke of journeys westward."

"Yes; she dreads the voyage, and feels for me—poor thing—more, far more than I deserve, for there is *selfishness* at the root of all my exertions;

though she, woman like, refuses to see the base alloy."

"But there was no alloy," I rejoined, hastily, "in the disinterestedness with which you gave up your wife's promised dower—no alloy in——"

"I could not have married Bertha then and there without such a display of *magnanimity*," broke in Edward, "so that instance of heroism may count for nothing. And now, as we are within a furlong or two of Deenish Island, I may as well 'knock off' my long story, and we will see how Bertha has been amusing herself during what she must have thought its endless and tedious length."

CHAPTER X.

DEENISH ISLAND—PHILIP GASCOIGNE'S VIEW OF IRISH AFFAIRS.

It would be impossible to imagine a lovelier scene than was presented to our view on landing on the island purchased by Philip Gascoigne for a fabulously small sum; and which contained, with the exception of a few cabins, only the one tolerably comfortable shooting lodge erected by the owner of the small domain for his especial use.

He was standing on a rock, half grey and half heather-covered, which stood in the centre of the island; and was watching through his glass the manœuvres of the cutter as she slackened sail preparatory to the lowering of the boat. It was only on one side of the shore that we could effect a landing, as almost in every direction the heavy ground-swell of the restless Atlantic was rolling in upon the low rocks girdling our friend's dominions,

and rendering the approach of the boat dangerous to itself and those within it.

"How glad I am to see you!—how good of you to come!" shouted the sun-burnt ex-dragoon, through the long fair beard which blew about his face. And then we all scrambled up the rocks—Bertha aided by his strong arm—and were conducted along the short slippery turf to the lodge.

Very small it was—quite the abode of a single man who cared little for creature comforts—but our welcome was indeed a hearty one, and the simple fare, cooked by a bare-legged peasant-woman, was seasoned by the pleasant and intellectual conversation of our host. For Philip had always been a thoughtful, earnest man, and the great misfortune of his life had given a fresh impetus to a nature ever open to serious impressions, and to a heart filled to overflowing with a desire in some way, yet undiscovered, to benefit his fellow-sufferers in a world where happiness is the exception rather than the rule. In the evening, and whilst smoking our pipes in indolent contentment, the conversation naturally turned upon the character and habits of the people with whom our host had for so many months been sojourning.

"They are certainly very pleasant fellows to have to do with," said Philip, "and there is *some* reality in their expressed good feelings towards me, since my mother had the signal honour of being an O'Shaughnessy; but as a rule, they hate the English, although they generally bestow upon the Saxons, whether visitors or settlers, a more than usual amount of agreeably-sounding *blarney*."

"I wish one *could* trust them," said Edward, "for there are traits in their national character which one cannot but admire, as, for instance, their almost superhuman patience and good spirits under trials and privations: and (in the total absence of hope for the future) the apparent facility with which they call up a laugh amidst the misery of the present."

"But," rejoined Gascoigne, whose countenance had grown very serious whilst Edward touched so feelingly on the patience of the Irish people—"but have you never noticed that the cheerfulness which we all admire, is almost always in words only, and that often when the tongue is uttering the humorous words that call a smile to the stranger's lip, the heart that utters them is full of bitterness? See the woe and careworn look upon the pale faces of the working men; look at the toiling women—young

still in years, but with wrinkled brows and unjoyous countenances—old before their time! The very children, too, are not as other children, but bear betimes their part in the daily struggle against privation, 'rough weather,' and anticipated pauperism!"

"It is a sad picture," said I, "and one that the people might have 'sat for,' I fancy, any time for centuries past. And the world believes (for have not writers worthy of credit said the same thing scores of times?) that Ireland has but herself to blame for her faults and her misfortunes! Read Spenser in the olden days—glance over the pages of Froude in these our times, and you will find in different words the same opinion, namely—that there is nothing to be done for Ireland because of the hopelessly bad characteristics that mark the inhabitants of the country."

"Like the London Club," laughed Philip, "which was described as a remarkably good one, with the exception of its members, who were all bad. But," added he, "it always strikes me as a wonderful fact, that being as it is a province of England, Ireland should never have become (so to speak) *English*. Only one idea (a very contrary one to that of amalgamating it with herself in one great

country) has ever seemed to occur as possible with regard to this ill-fated land, and that idea is neither more nor less than *extermination*. It was a thought that suggested itself to 'many furious spirits' more than two centuries ago, when 'they wished that Ireland would rebel again, and that all might be put to the sword;' nor was the idea therefore a novel one that was mooted in our own days by a great and mighty General, who, forgetting that Erin was the land of his birth, and that it was partly through the bravery of her sons that his victories had been gained, expressed his deliberate opinion that the only thing to be done for Ireland was to sink her bodily for awhile beneath the billows of the Atlantic."

"An expeditious and summary method of saving much trouble, expense, and responsibility on her account," rejoined Edward. "It can, I think, scarcely be doubted that, in the early days of Ireland's subjection (fairly *conquered* she has never been) a more generous and merciful policy might have proved more efficacious than tyranny, in civilising this singularly-constituted people. In a survey* of Ireland, published in the olden time, we find this opinion stated. I will read it aloud,

* The Political Anatomy of Ireland, in the reign of Charles II.

for I have the little book by me, and you will judge for yourselves whether or not the opinion is one worthy of consideration.

"'If Henry II. had, or could have, brought over all the people of Ireland into England, declining the benefit of their land, he had fortified, beautified, and enriched England, and done real kindness to the Irish. But the same work is near four times as hard to be done now as then; but it might be done now to the advantage of both parties. Whereas there are now 300,000 British, and 800,000 Papists, whereof 600,000 live in a brutish, nasty condition, as in cabins with neither chimney, stairs, nor windows: if an exchange was made of but 200,000 Irish, and the like manner of British brought over in their room, then the natural strength of the British would be equal to the Irish; but their political and artificial strength three times as great. There are among the 600,000 above-mentioned of the poor Irish, not above 20,000 of unmarried marriageable women, nor would above 2000 per annum grow and become such. Wherefore, if one-half of the said women were in one year, and the other half the next, transported into England, and disposed one to each parish, and as many English brought back and married to the Irish as would improve their dwelling

but to an house and garden of three pounds value, the whole work of natural transmutation and union would have been effected.' "

Philip laughed heartily as Fairholme concluded his quotation.

"I don't know," he said, "what the amiable author means by 'natural transmutation,' for it seems to me rather a breaking-up of natural ties to carry off young women from their parents and friends, and possibly from their 'followers,' without, I conclude, paying them the compliment of asking their consent."

"It would have been a violent measure, undoubtedly, but you must remember that the times were lawless times, and that the arm of the reigning English monarch was both strong and long-reaching. We must recollect also that in this reign, and even so late as that of Henry VIII., the Irish 'were accounted aliens, foreigners, and also enemies, whom if an Englishman had then killed, he had suffered nothing for it.' "

"A dreadful policy truly it was," I remarked, "and a short-sighted one; nor can I help agreeing with the author whose opinion you have cited, that the amalgamation of the Celtic and Saxon races would have been everything in favour of improvement."

"Yes," rejoined Fairholme, "for not only might there have resulted a happy modification of some Celtic characteristics, but a certain amount of community of interests must perforce have followed. Whereas, the Irish peasantry, especially in Connaught, remain unchanged and unimproved since the dark days of the early Henrys; while from the constant intermarriages, they form, in this part of the country at least, one large family, hanging closely together for good or for evil with the affectionate pertinacity for which those of their nation have ever been remarkable."

"And," said I, "if there be a pitiable spectacle (on a large scale) upon earth, it is that of a country like this, which in the nineteenth century has never *had its day*. For the Irish have no past to be proud of. No grand old history to remind mankind that they were once a nation whose name resounded through the world! Her present is a bye-word, and her future is wrapped in gloom. Her gallant soldiers have fought but in the ranks of her conquerors; and her orators, her poets, and her men of learning, merged in the history of her mighty neighbour, shed no honour on the country which gave them birth!"

"Some of those you allude to," suggested Philip,

"have been also sadly wanting in filial respect; but, *en revanche*, one of Ireland's eloquent sons was found ready at the call to expend some of his most brilliant oratory on the wrongs of his ill-used country: nor can we forget that it was one of Erin's own music-loving children whose tender strains have touched our English hearts so often; and that, not only when

> 'He spoke, as flowers could sing and speak,
> If Love could lend their leaves a tongue,'

but in his more serious moods, and when tuning his harp to solemn strains, he mourned for his hapless fatherland—

> 'Thinking how man had curst
> What Heaven had made so glorious!'

"And, making all due allowance for poetical exaggeration, the country which we have so often heard quoted as *meant to be* 'great, glorious, and free,' is one on which Nature has indeed bestowed many an advantage. But," continued Edward, "we cannot but acknowledge that her good gifts have in this instance been sadly thrown away. The geographical position of Ireland is admirable, the harbours safe and numerous, and the protection (if needed) of a powerful country is close at hand. Why is it, then, that whilst we see prosperity, happiness, and

internal serenity enjoyed by countries in Europe not half, or indeed not one quarter, of Ireland's dimensions—*she*, a portion of England, should remain still poor, and miserable, and a mark for public reprobation? We see little inland German dukedoms enjoying their small respectability, and forming alliances even with our own princesses; while Ireland, which, from her position, her size, and her manifest advantages, might add to our greatness, is instead only a thorn in our side, and a blot on our good name!"

"And yet," I remarked, "how much do we hear of the march of improvement, and of the increased prosperity of this island! I suspect, however, that such eulogiums generally occur after an unusual interval has elapsed between agrarian outrages, or when favourable reports have chanced to come from a particular district in which the flight of the aborigines before the advance of civilisation has been more than usually rapid."

"Your conjecture may be in some degree correct," said Edward; "nor can there, I imagine, be a doubt, that in some parts of the country a marked improvement (attributable, however, in a great measure to very extensive emigration) has taken place."

"And the English have certainly fewer to *hate*,"

broke in Gascoigne, abruptly. "For that they *do* hate (collectively) the Irish people, is a fact of which I am certain. They may profess to like the 'pleasant people to do with,' by whose *buffoonery* they are amused; but if you take notice of all that they say concerning their Celtic brethren, you will find an immense proportion of contemptuous abuse mixed up with their encomiums. 'They all *lie*, from the highest to the lowest.' 'They are all ungrateful,' and 'the poor are all thieves.' Can any one deny that these are the remarks we constantly hear made whenever the Irish character comes under discussion?"

"I am far from intending to deny what you have advanced," replied Edward; "but let us examine into the reasons for the *facts* you have stated. In the first place—Why do the English dislike the people of this country? I maintain that it is almost purely a matter of religion. There is no hatred so strong as a religious hatred; and when we can trace in the conduct of our Christian brethren a particular objection to the Irish (who in their desire for employment might possibly 'apply for work' at their hands), it is fair to conclude that for 'Irish' we might safely read '*Papist.*' It is painful to notice in the conduct, even of those by whom an example of the highest Christian charity should

be set, the total absence (in its noblest and holiest sense) of the feeling required. It is a fact, but too well known in this country, that in the dreadful famine year, and when the accounts of disease and death amongst the doomed people moved the hardest hearts to pity, one English Protestant clergyman, obeying, as he said, the orders of his archbishop, addressed his congregation in favour of the starving Irish people, but at the same time he advised them to give 'grudgingly,' even as he and his curate were prepared to give 'grudgingly,' the one 'five shillings,' and the other 'half a crown!' Another clergyman, at the same trying period, said that he would of course preach his charity sermon in favour of the Irish, but that he would take occasion to record in it all that he had ever heard against that 'wicked and ungrateful people.' Another is known to have said as follows: 'I own that, instead of feeling any commiseration for, or any disposition to assist, the people of Ireland, I would rather help them to another Cromwell, who might rule them in the only way they deserve to be ruled, viz., with a rod of iron.'"

"Let us hope," remarked Gascoigne, "that the reverend gentlemen had never perused the writings of Lord Clarendon, for in them the sufferings of the

Irish, at the hands of the Puritans, are recorded, if I recollect right, as awful—'surpassing even those of the Jews in their destruction by Titus. The first act of Cromwell was, I believe, to collect all the native Irish who had survived destruction and remained in the country, and to transplant them into the province of Connaught, which had been completely depopulated and laid waste during the progress of the rebellion. They were ordered to retire there by a certain day, and forbidden to repass the river Shannon on pain of death: and this sentence of deportation was rigidly enforced till the Restoration. Their ancient possessions were seized and given up to the conquerors, as was the property of every man who had taken a part in the rebellion or followed the fortunes of the king after the murder of Charles the First; and this whole fund was distributed amongst the officers and soldiers of Cromwell's army in satisfaction of the arrears of their pay; and to the adventurers who had advanced money to defray the expenses of the war.'* It was a 'bad lot' undoubtedly, that not only invaded and overran the country, but also who eventually settled in it; and as it was in the crime-stained county of Tipperary that, it is believed, the greatest portion

* Description of Lord Clare.

of the dregs of Cromwell's army established themselves, it may be supposed that to the admixture of their unworthy blood, *their* peculiar tendency to homicidal deeds may (if it really exists) be partly accounted for."

"But," said I, "granted that among those who should have been most forward in assisting the Irish sufferers, many were worse than backward, grudging them the offerings that they would have so gladly called for had the perishing ones been any other than Irish *Papists*, surely we should pay some tribute to the noble Christian hearts who gave so munificently, not only of their abundance, but of the little they could call their own."

"True; and all honour to them and to their liberal British instincts," said Edward, energetically. "All honour to the charity of individuals who, in a great national calamity, forget their antipathy when the wail of starvation reached their ears! And do not believe it when you hear that the Irish were either then or now ungrateful for benefits received. It is hard to maintain ever warm in the heart a sensation of gratitude when the cabin is cold and damp, when the food is very scarce, and when stern necessity has compelled the sale of the one 'small little cow,' on their possession of which depended

the 'sup o' milk' for the famished and hungry children. No; the very existence of any *glowing* sentiment is impossible under such circumstances, and that it should burst forth momentarily (which it never fails to do after a suddenly-received benefit) is all that we have a right to expect."

"Gascoigne has forgotten, I think," said I, after a short pause in the conversation, "one of the worst accusations against the Irish, namely, their murderous propensities, and their fostering of criminals. For the first, I cannot but think that they are unjustly accused; and for the latter——"

"I beg your pardon," said Gascoigne, interrupting me; "but I really cannot think that they are *unjustly* accused, for I consider a recourse to personal violence to be (as is the case with all savage and untrained people) one of the characteristics of the Irish nation; but it is only by the comparison of their homicidal crimes with those committed in other countries (and in England especially), that the degree of guilt existing here can be properly and justly estimated by English people. Judged after that manner, and if we can believe the several statistics of crime in this and other lands, it does not appear that the Irish character for bloodthirstiness should be so super-eminent."

"I have heard," I said, "that murders in England are in the proportion of eleven to one in Ireland. I mean, of course, amongst an equal number of the population."

"And *our* murders," said Edward, "are, in my opinion, crimes of such infinitely deeper dye! Slaughtered infants, tortured women, poisoned husbands and wives! Whilst here—but we will not now touch upon the landlord and tenant question, for it is growing late, and Gascoigne will think that we have invaded his solitude, to talk of nothing more amusing than agrarian crimes and Riband outrages."

So, somewhat wearied by the day's exertions, we retired to our narrow beds, in which we were soon lulled to slumber by the monotonous murmur of the waves as they foamed on the rocks beneath the latticed windows of our rooms.

CHAPTER XI.

GERVASE MACNAMARA'S STORY.

THERE was a rough week, as far as regarded the weather, after our arrival at the island, for the Equinox set in a fortnight before its time, and for three days, such a south-west gale blew out of the heavens, accompanied by almost incessant torrents of rain, as for strength and durability I had never witnessed before.

On the afternoon of the second day there was a delusive breaking of the thick cloud-like vapours that hung over every object on the earth and in the sky, and to our infinite satisfaction we caught a momentary glimpse of the mountains on the mainland.

"Look!" said Gascoigne, as he handed me a large telescope. "Do you see that cleft, black and hollow, with two unequally tall, and almost perpendicular acclivities, rising on either side of it?"

"I do distinctly, and a small white object at the base of the hollow."

"That object is a house," continued our host; "and in it lives the best of landlords and good fellows, and my only neighbour."

"It must be charming in summer," said Bertha, who had been examining the site of the desolate mountain residence. "But you do not mean that any human being lives there always?"

"Macnamara does, or nearly so," replied Philip. "He thinks it his duty as a landlord, and of one whose responsibilities as such are very great, to sacrifice his personal comfort, and that of as good a wife as ever lived, in order that he may live amongst his tenantry. It *is* a sacrifice of course, but as he says, he does not think himself justified in leaving his tenants to the tender mercies of a bailiff, who would probably mislead him as to their real condition. He has been very liberal to them this year, knowing how great is the universal distress, and has abated considerably his claim to rent in the case of well-conducted and industrious tenants. In other instances he has not ejected summarily those unable to pay—knowing that they would become a general burthen to the poor rate-payers—but has denied himself and his wife many a luxury, and above all, the great

one of change and society, in order to assist the starving creatures (lying, as too many of the country people now do, upon straw, and feeding upon half rations) with the wherewithal to emigrate to a more prosperous land. But," continued Philip, "if Mrs. Fairholme is 'agreeable,' I will tell you an anecdote of Macnamara's early life (he was a wild and careless young fellow then); and how, ten years ago, he won the wife, who has since been in these wild solitudes so invaluable a helpmate.

"The estate of Cuiltra had been for generations back the property of Gervase Macnamara's family. It was not a very profitable possession, for the proportion of rock and moorland was considerable, but Gervase, as I have just said, has done his best to improve the land as well as the condition, both moral and physical, of his tenantry. The last owner of Cuiltra left behind him a widow and two sons, to say nothing of an unmarried daughter, who also plays a part in the following history. The sons were intelligent and well-looking young men, especially the eldest, and both were bent upon pursuing some profession in the busy world, and leaving their mountain home with its prospects of ill-paid rents, its view of the Atlantic Ocean, and its desolate moorland, to the care of the mother and her bailiff.

"In pursuance of this resolve, Gervase obtained a commission in an infantry regiment, and Peter, the younger brother, became in process of time junior partner in a respectable and thriving medical 'house' in Dublin. It chanced that when Gervase had just purchased his commission, his regiment was ordered to the Irish capital, and that then and there he met with the young lady who is now the sharer of that pretty house among the hills, the which abode, when you make a better acquaintance with its merits and situation, will I hope attract a large share of your admiration.

"Miss Flora Johnstone was the niece and adopted daughter of an old English bachelor, who had retired into private life upon the fortune of twenty thousand pounds, made in a successful mercantile career. Her mother was an Irishwoman, and at the time when Gervase became acquainted with her, she and old Johnstone were visiting some relations who lived in the neighbourhood of Dublin. Flora was pretty, and light both of heart and heels, a little inclined to be 'fast,' but a very good little girl withal, and the way that with all her heart she enjoyed the Lord Lieutenant's balls and receptions and her flirtations with the officers and the aides-de-camp, was a pleasure to behold. I shall spare you and myself the description of

the rise and progress of the more serious affair with Gervase Macnamara, which ere long lent a graver look to her bright grey eyes, and sent them with a wandering glance around, whenever the handsome Irish captain was by chance absent from her side. Now, the fair Flora, besides that she was *tolerably* rich in personal attractions, was known to be *extremely* so (in prospect at least) in worldly possessions; and this, strange as it may seem, appeared in the eyes of the romantic Gervase to be the only drawback to his promised, or at least hoped-for, happiness. For had he not a snug little property of his own which brought him in a clear six hundred pounds a-year? and, besides, had not the Macnamaras once been kings, and could it be supposed that a descendant of a royal race would stoop to seek the money-bags of a Saxon?

"There was doubtless something very grand and imposing in this independence of feeling, but unfortunately the whole structure gave way before the artillery of Flora's grey eyes, and Captain Macnamara and his pride surrendered at discretion. *Then*, however, and not till then, came the real tug of war, for Uncle Jacob Johnstone, when he was appealed to, refused his consent in terms which scarcely permitted even of a remonstrance, and the unfortunate

descendant of the kings was left to mourn in secret over his disappointment, and to devise measures for circumventing the 'old ruffian's' (as he disrespectfully called him) uncivil and unlooked-for treatment of his proposals.

"Now the only relation, to the best of his knowledge, that yet remained to Uncle Jacob, was his niece Flora, his dead brother's child; and on that bright, laughter-loving little girl the old man literally doated. She loved the retired, and now often ailing city merchant, dearly too. In sickness she nursed him with the devoted tenderness of a child; and in health she amused him with her jokes and merry laughter, and cheered him with the long-forgotten English ballads that he loved to hear. But such a tenderness as Flora nourished in her heart for Uncle Jacob was not enough to fill that deep repository of a youthful maiden's inmost feelings; and there came a time when Nature, which, as we all know, hates a vacuum, spoke appealingly from out the empty recesses of little Flora's breast, and spoke, unfortunately, in favour of a man who, in Uncle Jacob's eyes, possessed every disadvantage as his niece's suitor which an unhappy lover could be cursed with.

"'My dear,' said Uncle Jacob to his adopted daughter, as she sat before him, with a face half

tearful, and half—ay, rather more than half—defiant of his control; 'my dear, I won't hear of that jackanapes' (jackanapes was the word for 'swell' in Uncle Jacob's day), 'I won't hear of him for you. I hate a soldier, and I hate an Irishman worse even than I do a lord. *They'd* just treat you as if they'd done you an honour in taking you into the family—spend your cash, and trample on you. I know 'em, don't you be afraid.'

"'But, Uncle Jacob, Captain Macnamara——"

"'Yes, I know—the Captain's well enough to look at, and he's mighty civil, and all that sort o' thing *now;* but I'm not to be caught that way. I'm an old bird, my dear—sharp as—as—an old raven, and can see as far into a millstone. No, no, I say—no soldiers for me. When you bring me a stout, healthy young fellow—not with a thin face and hollow cheeks, along with sitting up o' nights, and with dead eyes that he thinks look killing—but a stout healthy young fellow who has made his own money, whether in town or country—I won't say no to him. He shall have you, my girl, and a pretty penny with you, that I promise him. So cheer up, my lassie, and forget the officer's big whiskers. Why, he is but a lath of a man, after all;' and with this reflection on the elegant attenuation

of Captain Macnamara's figure, Uncle Jacob kissed his niece's cheek, and—for he came (according to his would-be nephew's phraseology) under the denomination of a 'stout party'—waddled from the room in which this decided opinion had been expressed.

"As may be supposed, the young lady in love left no means untried to soften the heart of her obdurate old relation. She attempted 'soft-sawder,' in the shape of kisses and caresses, that would have effected their object with any man on earth save the one, the better half of whose affections were centred in the money he had made; and, failing this mode of subjugation, she tried what menaces, in the shape of as long a visage as she could stretch her pretty facial line to, and as strict a silence as she could persuade herself to undergo, were able to effect. All her measures, however, to attain the desired end proved unavailing, and this melancholy fact having been communicated by letter to the anxious lover, some steps of a far more energetic character were decided upon between the pair.

"'Me darling,' the lover was saying, one soft summer afternoon, beneath a spreading thorn-tree in the Phœnix Park, 'me darling, I wouldn't ask it of you, only I can't think of any other way at all. It isn't *there* they'll be looking for you; and sure

the uncle wouldn't be expecting you till he saw you at all.'

"'But, Gervase,' half remonstrated Flora, whose two little hands were held tightly in the Irishman's strong grasp, 'it does seem such a wild, horrid, odd thing to do!'

"'Ah, now, but isn't it the only chance to make us happy?' sighed the soldier; 'and isn't it just the other way from where they'd be looking for us? For sure, me darling, no one in their senses would go to a lunatic asylum till they were forced to!'

"'Oh, it isn't that I mind, dear,' said Flora; 'it isn't that at all. But I shall hate to be alone; and then I'm so awfully afraid of laughing. I know I shall betray myself when I'm playing the trick;' and the merry girl's musical laugh rang out, as she showed her pearly teeth to her admiring lover.

"'And how about Uncle Jacob?' asked the latter, after a pause.

"'Oh, I'm not the least bit afraid of him. When once we're married, he'll be so fond of you—as fond as he is of me. You don't know Uncle Jacob. He'll be angry just at first; and, indeed, I *do* wish we could be married with his leave, for he is so dear and kind; but I can coax him into being all right again. Oh, no, you needn't be the least afraid of

Uncle Jacob! But tell me, Gervase, are you quite sure they'll take me in?'

"'Oh, yes. There's me brother will give the certificate; and besides, they know me well, for I went there once with a poor young brother officer of mine. A boy, just fancy that, who had delirium tremens at nineteen, and broke his mother's heart—he was an only son—before he was of age!'

"'How very horrid! And we're to go to-morrow! Gervase, it rather frightens me now that it has come so near. Not that Uncle Jacob will ever break his heart for me; and if he *should* cut me off with a shilling, why I must be a real soldier's wife, and sit upon a baggage-train, that's all.'

"The alternative thus rather confusedly expressed by the romantic Flora, did not certainly appear in a very fascinating light to the more matter-of-fact soldier; but he also had confidence in the young lady's hold upon her uncle's affections, and therefore made no sign of hesitation or going back. His hand was on the plough by which the aged merchant's hard-earned guineas were to be unearthed; and there was now, he felt, no better plan for them than the one he had proposed to Flora, and to which she had rather reluctantly consented.

"On the following afternoon, when Uncle Jacob

returned from the Phœnix, and inquired for his niece, the young lady was reported missing. As 'goods' of his, her place was empty; and 'in stock' the merchant had no longer a pretty girl to boast of, or a nice ornamental 'article' to adorn his table, and throw brightness on his lonely home. Of course, he at once suspected the captain of being at the bottom of this heavy misfortune: but how to prove it?—how, indeed, even to *get at* the man whom he suspected of having stolen from him his best treasure?—for Captain Macnamara was neither with his regiment nor at his home, and it was doubtful whether he even received the letters, in which the irate old gentleman poured abuse upon his head, and swore that the ungrateful girl should (for any aid that he might give her) be a pauper all her days.

"Meanwhile, the object of all this vituperation had arrived, on the very evening of the day when Uncle Jacob first found out his loss, at the house in which, for one long fortnight, she was to remain in a state of almost entire separation from the lover of her choice.

"It was at a large brick building situated in extensive grounds, and called by courtesy a *Park*, that the carriage containing the runaway lovers drew up.

"'Now remember, dearest,' whispered Gervase, tenderly, 'that you need show but one symptom of insanity, namely, that of destructiveness. I mentioned this to Dr. Glegg, who will, of course, have taken precautions to prevent any injury to his furniture, and also to my precious little "sister,"' he added tenderly, as, with a faint attempt at facetiousness, he drew her towards him, and snatched a last kiss, prior to the opening of the door.

"Flora's heart beat a little faster, as, taking her lover's arm, she followed the servant into the reception room. There was something ominous in the almost solemn stillness of the house, something worse than prison-like in the iron bars which stretched across the windows, and something that told of miseries far worse than either death or sickness in the cold searching eye, and still colder manner, of the grave man who met them in that cheerless parlour.

"'My sister, Dr. Glegg,' spoke out the captain, gently but firmly disengaging himself from Miss Johnstone's clinging arm, 'my sister, whose visit you have been kind enough to accept of. A short one I trust it will be, for I would not trespass on your kindness, and we are all anxious to have her again amongst us.'

"'Of course—of course,' said the doctor, fixing his strange, glittering eyes on Flora's face. 'I have no doubt we shall do admirably—really admirably. How old are you, Miss Macnamara?'

"'Eighteen,' answered the girl, with a smile at the abruptness of the question.

"'Health good?—general health, I mean.'

"'Yes, thank you.'

"'No headaches? Accustomed to a shower-bath? Like it cold?'

"But at this juncture Flora's strong inclination to laugh became so apparent, that Gervase hastened to interpose.

"'You will judge better of her state in a few days,' he said; 'in the meantime I will take my leave, and Nellie, dear,' he continued, turning to the girl, whose merriment was now effectually checked, 'Nellie, my dear sister, remember your promise, and let us have no mischief done. You are not at home, you know, and Dr. Glegg is particular—very particular—as I have already told you.'

"They were his last words to his betrothed, whose face had grown rather pale as she listened to them, and whose grey eyes were full of tears as the door closed upon his retreating figure.

"'And now, suppose we go to our room, my

dear,' suggested the doctor, but the words were no sooner spoken, than any further remark was prevented by the entrance of another, and a much younger and more prepossessing-looking individual.

"This was no other than Dr. Stephen Fanshaw, the nephew and partner of the chief proprietor of the establishment. He looked with a considerable amount of curiosity, but with nothing of professional rudeness, at the slight young figure, and the decidedly intelligent countenance which he saw before him, and then, after whispering a few words in his uncle's ear, he waited for a reply.

"'Not in the padded room! Oh, no; spoils everything, from what I hear. Can't hurt bare walls much, and there's not a great deal besides in No. 20. Let her go to No. 20.'

"Stephen Fanshaw, who was a rather handsome and very intelligent-looking man, of some thirty years of age, glanced compassionately at the pretty delicate girl, who stood there awaiting what seemed to him her doom.

"'Is this necessary?' he asked.

"'Quite. I have the brother's, the nearest relative's authority. Seclusion is absolutely necessary. Dangerous occasionally,' he whispered to his young relative, who, at that intimation, abstained from all

further opposition, and, offering his arm to Flora, led her silently from the room.

"Together they ascended the broad, uncarpeted staircase, and together passed—still silently—along the echoing passages; and ever and anon as they passed the doors which were on either side of them, the poor girl, fancying that she heard the terror-striking, but muffled, cries of those bereft of God's chief gift of reason, clung still closer to her companion, whilst her breath came short and thick.

"At last they came to No. 20. A dark, strong door, with the number painted in white figures on its surface, and with a key-hole of large dimensions, into which the doctor inserted a corresponding key.

"'This is your room,' he said, when he and his companion found themselves within it.

"'This?" she murmured in reply; and as her eye took in its scanty furniture, its comfortless floor, and stretcher bed, she added hopelessly, 'It's very wretched.'

"'Very,' responded Fanshaw; and even as he spoke, a doubt, of he knew not what description, crossed his mind. 'It *is* very wretched, and I am truly sorry to leave you in such a place, but——"

"Oh! do not think of that," she said, blushing, and recollecting the why and wherefore she found

herself in a position so peculiar. 'Only if I had some books—and then will *no* one come to me—no woman? I am not used to wait upon myself.'

"'A female keep——I mean a servant—will be here in half-an-hour with your supper; and as for books, will you take care of them,' he added, with a smile, 'if I send you some to choose from, from my limited collection?'

"'Of course I will,' she answered, forgetting in her gratitude the part she had to play, 'and thank you very much; good-night!' And shaking hands with him, she was left alone with her reflections. He had turned the key so softly that she was in ignorance of the fact that she was a prisoner till the noisy opening of the door by the female attendant reminded her of that unpleasant circumstance. The new-comer was a strong-limbed, and rather repulsive-looking woman, the servant, who, laying a tray upon the one deal table, spread its contents before the patient, and motioned her to eat.

"'Thank you, I am not hungry,' said Flora, gently. 'But I feel extremely thirsty, and I don't see any wine. I should like some very weak wine and water, please.'

"'Not in orders,' said the woman, curtly.

"'Then take my compliments to Dr. Glegg, and

say I give the order,' said the girl, who had a spirit of her own, and who, as an heiress, had been little accustomed to have her wishes disregarded.

"'Tut—tut,' said the woman, authoritatively, 'you just eat your supper, and hold your tongue. We don't allow no talking here, and I've got to go to No. 50 to give them their suppers too, and can't be waiting here all night.'

"'Dr. Fanshaw's compliments, and has sent some books,' said the voice of a man in livery; and Flora, forgetting her annoyance in her curiosity, took the parcel from the servant's hand.

"It was *only* 'Pickwick!'—only the book that has cheated so many sufferers into a temporary oblivion of their woes, brought smiles to the withered lip of age, and kindly thoughts of slandered human nature to the soured hearts of social *Timons*. But to the hapless prisoner, the reading of those pages was a new pleasure; what wonder, therefore, was it, that while the daylight lasted, and before the shades of night combined with the branches of the old trees which swayed against the window-frames to throw the gloom of night upon her chamber—what wonder, I say, was it, that Flora, lonesome girl that she was, should have read on delighted, till other footsteps in the passage gave warning of a visitor.

"Again the door was opened, and again that harsh repulsive-looking woman came—this time with lamp in hand—to order Uncle Jacob's heiress to obey her will. "

"'To bed!' she said. 'No more reading here to-night! Come—you must be quick, young lady! No. 21 has got the cat in there, and she'll have had the dumb thing's head off before I can look round me.'

"'But I don't want to go to bed just yet.'

"'Well—that's as you like, you know. Only I must take away the candle, and that fine silk dress will all be rumpled if you lie about in it.'—'A silk,' she muttered to herself, 'as is worth ten shillings a yard if it's worth a penny, and to be put on the back of a lunatic—it's a waste and a shame!'

"'I think I'll go to bed,' said the poor thing, wearily. 'Oh, how slow the time does go!'

"But if the hours rolled on languidly in the daylight, and when the fire of genius cast a rosy ray over the young girl's thoughts, how was it when the night had come, and when a prisoner, and alone, she lay upon her comfortless bed, and more than half repented her of the step that she had taken?

"At first, and whilst the sound of feet and voices

in the corridor banished the conviction of her utter loneliness, the girl's spirit did not fail her; but when the noises of the night were hushed, and all that (for a time) she heard was the low whistling of the wind as it moaned through the topmost branches of the fir-trees—then the sense of isolation, and, worse evil still, of *imprisonment*, began to steal over her senses, and it required all her courage to do battle against the demons of superstitious fear that hovered around her. 'If I should be ill,' she said to herself, 'or if some one of the poor dreadful creatures who are all around me should escape, and find the key and come to me! Perhaps the door's only bolted! or they might break it open! Madmen are so strong, they say, and then—— Ah! Heaven! What's that? Oh, what an awful scream!'

"And the poor frightened thing, burying her face in her pillow, endeavoured to shut out the sounds that terrified her. And so she lay till morning, and never raised her pretty head to look about her till the gay August sun tinted the east with crimson, and brightened her prison bars with its most welcome presence. It was a haggard face that little Flora looked at in the morning, when stepping from her sleepless bed she contemplated

her altered countenance in the small mirror that hung beside the window.

"'Why, Gervase would hardly know me,' was her instant thought. 'It is all the fault of horrid 21; but I shall look better in the afternoon when Gervase comes! Dear Gervase!—and I to half reproach him in the night for bringing me to this tiresome place! I shall make him laugh by telling him about my fright and No. 21. I dare say, after all, it was the cat—the wretched cat that No. 21 was throttling. Oh, what an awful noise, and what a rush of water! It reminds me though that I should like a bath!' And tapping at the door, she strove to call the housemaid's attention to her requirements. At last the woman answered the summons, and entered, looking very black and cross.

"'Will you bring a bath,' said Flora, 'please.'

"'You'll have a *douche*, if Dr. Fanshawe says so.'

"'What is a douche?'

"Oh, you'll know soon enough, I warrant you; and you'll be catching it, young lady, before long, if you keep making noises at the door that way. So now you dress yourself, and don't be hammering again, or I shall know the reason why.'

"Flora felt very indignant at the woman's insolence, as she termed it, and her injured pride over-

coming for the moment both her prudence and her love, she resolved to remain no longer in a place where she was subjected to so much discomfort, and to an amount of impertinence which was as new as it was unendurable to her.

"'You will bring me some hot water immediately,' she said, loftily; 'and when I am dressed, you will inform Dr. Glegg that I desire to speak to him.'

"'Hoity toity!' said the woman. 'A pretty thing, indeed! The doctors have something else to do than to be running every moment to the female wards. You'll have your call when the time comes, and you'll have your recreations, and your meals, and that's enough. So, just you dress yourself, and everything'll go on like clockwork.'

"Not another word could the bitterly provoked girl extract from her morose and disagreeable guardian; nor were matters much mended by a visit from Dr. Glegg, who, in spite of all her assurances to the contrary, evidently persisted in his belief that she required control, and had been placed under his charge by those who had a right to watch over her safety. She could not bring herself to tell him the real circumstances of the case, and therefore there was nothing for it, but to wait with patience

till the visit of her betrothed would, by corroborating her assurances of perfect sanity, set her free from her now hated prison. But the hours wore away, and no lover came to cheer her spirits, or to effect her longed-for liberation; her disappointment, too, was rendered the more difficult to bear, by reason of the doctor's order that she should share in the out-of-door recreation of the patients. It was dreadful to be surrounded by those jibbering, meaningless faces! Dreadful to be placed, when her turn arrived, in the *swing*, which hung between the fir-trees, and then to be swayed to and fro by a harmless female lunatic, whose strength of arm rendered her well fitted for the task she had undertaken. But it was perhaps more dreadful still to see those middle-aged, and even elderly women, playing at their childish games, tossing about their shuttlecocks, in the belief that they were babies, and turning in their bewildered minds a string of daisies into a rosary of beads! For two hours by the clock did Flora Johnstone, sorely against her will, and with a degree of nervous tremor which she strove in vain to surmount, endure the close neighbourhood and companionship of those poor mindless beings. And then the hopes and fears of that dark day were over, for the twilight hour was come, and

once more under lock and key, the wretched girl must pass another night of fear and misery! Her spirit was quite broken now, and instead of firing up at the familiarity of her attendant, she implored her, and that almost on her knees, to be her friend, and take a message for her to the doctor—the young doctor—the one who had lent her books, and spoken so kindly to her.

"'You won't!' she cried. 'Oh, you are very cruel! There is no need to shut me up; if I could tell you everything, you would believe me. Indeed, indeed, I am not mad!' and she clung almost convulsively to the skirts of the hard woman's dress.

"She was not moved the breadth of a single hair by all the prayers that Flora poured into her ears, or by the piteous face that looked with such imploring agony into her own; for Mrs. Bennett was well used to all 'them cunning creatures' ways,' and was 'not to be taken in, not she, by a plausible young lunatic like that;' so, disregarding the half-frantic appeal of the terrified girl, that she would not lock her up there all alone, a prisoner, and listening to those shocking sounds, the inflexible guardian went her way, leaving the so lately prosperous and petted heiress in darkness and solitude!

"Poor child! it was a dreadful night she passed

there; for again, and far more cruelly than before, the nervous terror of being 'shut up' took possession of her faculties, whilst still the low wind—

'Sate in the pines, and gave out groan for groan,'

as the unnatural-sounding manifestations of their joy or woe broke in strange confusion on the young girl's senses. And where, in all that miserable time, where was the lover to whose devotion she had trusted, and who—(ah, she began to think it heartless now!)—had exposed her to this awful trial? 'How long,' she asked herself—'how long can I endure this agony of fear, and live? My God!' she cried aloud, at last, 'perhaps they mean to leave me here—to leave me here to curdle into madness—to scream—to howl—to tear at things—to kill the cats—to—— O God, take pity on me, for I am growing mad!' and with a scream, the strength of which might have rivalled those she had all night listened to in her agony, the miserable girl sprang from her bed, and shaking the door with the wild fury of insanity, she shrieked her lover's name till a mercifully-sent insensibility stole over her, and she lay, still and white as a corpse, upon the floor!

"On the morning which succeeded to that night of anguish, the following advertisement appeared in the second column of the *Times*:—

"'A HUNDRED POUNDS REWARD.—The above reward will be given to any person who may be instrumental in discovering and restoring to her friends a young lady who left her home on the 11th day of August last, and has not since been heard of. Age eighteen. Height five feet three inches—auburn hair, clear complexion, grey eyes, smiling countenance. Was dressed, when she left home, in a grey silk dress; straw bonnet, with blue convolvuluses inside, and a black mantilla. Linen marked F. J. Any information to be forwarded to J. J., No.'—, Westbourne Terrace.'

"Dr. Glegg and his nephew were seated at their comfortable breakfast, in a room out of hearing of 'anything unpleasant,' with the broad sheets of their favourite newspaper spread out before them. Of course, as the younger of the two, Dr. Fanshawe came in, in the first instance, for the advertisement sheet, and he at once glanced at the mysterious and suggestive second column. Once, and again, he read the announcement at its head, and was about, with a haste rather unusual to him, to make his comments thereupon, when his uncle forestalled him by saying—

"'Here's a singular thing! A gentleman thrown from his horse on the 12th, and seriously injured

And, by Jove! it's Captain Macnamara! The very young fellow who brought his sister here two days ago! Severe injury to the head, but likely to recover. Very singular! It may be that he'll require medical care. A fine young man, though. Very sad indeed!'

"'Doctor,' said Stephen, interrupting these professional exhibitions of compassion—'Doctor, if it's the same to you, I think I'll take the female wards to-day.'

"'Do, my good fellow. Your yesterday's holiday has given me a right to one to-day. And tell me what you make of No. 20. She rather puzzles me, I own.'

"A tap at the door, and a rather peevish 'Come in' from the owner of the establishment, was the next and by no means welcome interruption to the morning meal.

"'Please, Doctor,' said a voice, the voice of Mrs. Bennett—'please, Doctor, No. 20's in a fit, and *won't* come out of it.'

"The *won't* was very suggestive of the place and treatment, a treatment which had always been strenuously opposed by Fanshawe, who at once rose from his chair, and prepared to follow the female keeper from the room.

"'Now, this I call a bore,' said Dr. Glegg to himself. 'I hate to eat my meals alone; and if I've told those women once, I've told them fifty times, I would not be disturbed at breakfast. Stephen seems to like it, however. Well, there's no accounting for tastes; and some men are born lunatics;' after which sapient remark, the doctor went on with his breakfast and his news.

A very different scene and duty awaited his young relation in that dreary upper room, where, prone upon the floor, and with her long white sleeping garment for her only covering, lay the prostrate and now writhing form of 'No. 20.'

"The long rich 'auburn' hair had escaped from the control of its encircling net, and lay, like a soft perfumed veil, around her; and the 'blue' eyes, distended to an unnatural size, were fixed upon the door unmeaningly. There was no *merriment* in that ghastly face, though it clearly was young; and on the sleeve of the fine cambric of her night-dress, Stephen could read the initial letters F. and J.

"He raised her in his arms, and laid her on the bed, parting the hair from off her burning forehead, and feeling her throbbing pulses anxiously.

"'A brain fever of the worst kind, I fear,' he said, in a grieved voice; and then, with perfect self-

possession, he set himself heart and soul to the work of remedying the evil. Almost his first duty (and this, in spite of much remonstrance from his more worldly uncle) was to communicate the discovery to the anxious inserters of the advertisement; and, as may be supposed, old Jacob Johnstone did not long delay his coming.

"He was completely in the dark as to the *description* of house to which he had been directed; nay, when he was led into the room where his poor little niece lay raving, he could at first scarcely believe in her identity. Gone were the auburn tresses that the doting uncle deemed so matchless—gone the beaming smile—and gone the dimpled cheeks he loved to look upon! Uncle Jacob stood at the bed's foot of her who gazed at him, but gave no sign of recognition, and the tears coursed one another down his withered cheeks.

"'Good God, sir,' he said, abruptly, seeing that his emotion did not escape the eye of Dr. Fanshawe.

"'Good God, sir. This is very shocking, and very—what shall I say?—incomprehensible. How came my niece an inmate of this house? *What* is this house, sir? Speak—no falsehoods. Nay, I will be answered,' continued the impetuous old man,

as he saw, or fancied he saw, hesitation in the manner of the medical attendant.

"'I have neither a motive for deceiving you, nor a wish to disguise the truth,' answered Fanshawe, readily. 'This young lady was brought here by a gentleman—Captain Macnamara by name, who called himself her brother—and this house is a *private lunatic asylum.*'

"To describe the anger and despair of Mr. Johnstone at this announcement, and at the rapid increase of his niece's danger, would be impossible. He could scarcely be persuaded to leave her side, and took up his quarters in the dismal abode where he had found her. For many days she seemed to hover between life and death, but at length the battle was decided for the former, and the grim visitor retreated slowly and in good order from the scene of the short-lived but desperate combat. That the girl's life was saved was chiefly due, under Providence, to the unremitting care and the profound skill, especially in cases of mental alienation, of Doctor Fanshawe. He it was who, when reason was still tottering on its throne, kept the balance firmly, and by his judicious treatment, restored the darling of Uncle Jacob's declining years to the home she had deserted. But when the day at length

arrived on which it was deemed possible and prudent to remove the now convalescent girl to her uncle's house, it was evident that a more than usual melancholy (for her smile was still rare and wan) had settled on the once joyous face of pretty Flora Johnstone.

"'Why, what's the matter, deary?' Uncle Jacob said, as (in the September twilight) the two sat together in the comfortable Westbourne Terrace drawing-room. 'Not fretting after the captain, eh?'

"'No, dear uncle. But I should so like to know why—why—he forgot me.'

"Uncle Jacob scratched his head, and looked a little puzzled how to act. A month had passed since the eventful 12th of August, and in those four weeks how many things had happened!

"'I think that I should like to know he loved me once,' said little Flora, sadly, for she was still weak, and the tears came readily to the soft grey eyes.

"'Well, my deary, I think he did a little; but, you see, he got that wound——'

"Flora screamed, for she had not heard of the accident, and was now quite prepared to take her lover's part, and return to her allegiance.

"'Yes; though I suppose I've made a mess of it by telling you. He went a-shooting on the 12th'

(the very day, thought Flora, when I waited and wept for him), 'and got a chance crack from a gun.'

"'My poor, poor Gervase!' cried the agitated girl; and the next moment, thoroughly overcome by weakness and conflicting emotions, she burst into a violent and hysterical fit of sobbing, which nearly frightened Uncle Jacob out of his senses.

"He rang the bells till the wire broke, and nearly choked the sufferer by the totally inappropriate remedies which he insisted upon applying; and the only sensible thing he did, was to inform his niece the very moment she was capable of understanding him, that he had told a great falsehood—the first and the last—in order to test her love for the captain, and that now, seeing that she was bent on 'having him,' he supposed he must give in, and permit the young people to be happy.

"And so in time they were, for Flora lost no time in summoning her faithful lover, and in ascertaining the fact that a serious accident, occasioned by a fall from his horse, and which caused him to lie for several days insensible, had alone prevented his keeping the appointment at the very time on which the happiness of both depended.

"In process of time, as I need not I hope inform you, they were married; and so also was Stephen

Fanshawe—no longer a mad doctor—to the only sister of his grateful friend the captain, who never forgot that he owed, humanly speaking, his exceeding happiness and the restoration of his wife's reason, to Stephen Fanshawe and the second column of the *Times*."

CHAPTER XII.

A PATTERN LANDLORD—PHILIP'S THEORIES.

It was no tedious week, despite the rains and winds, which we spent with our friend Gascoigne in his island quarters; and in company with the aquatic birds, swarming in thousands amongst the rocks. Very wild and lonely indeed was the place, and desolate, while all around there sounded the cries of the curlew, and of the untameable sea-mews, as they flew either lonely or in vast flocks along the surface of the water.

We were fortunate (before our departure on an expedition which was to be shared by Philip Gascoigne), to have one fine day, which enabled us to make the acquaintance, in their secluded but comfortable home, of Captain Macnamara, and the wife whose life had been so nearly sacrificed by his rashness. There was little trace now in either, of the boy and girlish folly which had led to the imprudent act, for the Flora of Philip's tale was now a still

handsome but matter-of-fact looking matron of thirty, a good deal browned by exposure to the weather, and rather neglectful, in her retirement, of the adornment of her person. Her husband too had grown somewhat corpulent, and a little prejudiced and parochial, but he was hospitable and good-natured (as Philip declared, almost to a fault). Neither of them were ever, according to their own confession, either ill or out of spirits; and their children, whom they educated themselves, shared in those enviable characteristics.

It was impossible not to admire the high-principled self-devotion to their duties of Philip's friends; and I, for one, left them with a heartfelt wish that I could feel the inclination to imitate, as well as the power of appreciating, so admirable an example.

The following morning, which was the day appointed for our sail to Achill (a three days' affair probably), and as we were quietly smoking our pipes after our frugal breakfast, Philip's factotum of a servant approached us, and begged respectfully that our "Honours would jist cast an eye on two aigles, which were soaring above our heads." Of course we complied with his request, and by the help of a glass, could see the magnificent bold creatures well. One, the male bird, was smaller than its companion;

and both were closely followed by two pestilent jades of jackdaws, who were flying about the noble animals in their grand graceful swoops, but keeping just above them, so that even though they had not, from their very insignificance, been safe, it would have been impossible for the eagles to pounce upon their tormentors.

The idle *boys*, who were supposed to be digging potatoes in the "lazy beds" by the side of the garden-walk, knocked off their work effectually to watch the flight of the birds; and "Winny," our host's middle-aged widow of-all-work, bustled out in a state of great excitement, to drive in her favourite black hen, for "fear the 'big, ugly *lad*' should take a liking to it."

"They are becoming very rare in the country," said Edward, looking through the glass, "flying, like the people before the march of civilisation, as has been the case ever more with savage and untamed races!"

"Poor wretches!" said Philip, sadly. "I don't know what is to be done for them, especially in this wild western district, from whence the truth never reaches those who are able to help them. I have seen so much of this sort of thing. A great government Official undertakes, what he calls, a tour of inspection, *sees* their rags and wretchedness on the

road, and believes *not* the tale of misery they reveal, but the words of some school inspector, some venal hireling who, with the quick-wittedness of his countrymen, detects the view which the great man *wishes* to take of the state of the country, and crams him accordingly."

"And the great man, when he gives in his report," said Edward, assentingly, "informs other honourable gentlemen that the country is doing very well; and although he may not be quite either ignorant or silly enough to draw a parallel between the little Western 'Holdings' and the two and three-acre farms of flourishing Belgium, yet he leaves a general impression on the 'sinse' of the house that the Irish small farmers, though an improvident race, are, in point of fact, much better off than they deserve to be."

It was in conversation such as this that we passed the time, varied by calms and squalls, till we were within half an hour's sail of the bold rocky promontory known as Achill Head, towards which we were slowly sailing, admiring greatly, as we approached it, the grand dark mass frowning down upon the sea. The wind was nearly due south, but very light, and threatening ere long to die away altogether. This, however, was no misfortune to

us, as it formed part of our plan to land at the Sound of Achill, and visit the interior of the island. The Achill Mountains are, I fancy, the loftiest range to be seen in any portion of the British Isles, as they extend for nearly four miles (at least so say the surveys); and at the highest point, which rises perpendicularly from the sea, reaching to the elevation of 2200 feet.

Unable to resist the temptation of viewing those grand mountains from the sea, we had followed on our northern way too far for the prosecution of our original plan; but at a suggestion of the sapient Mike, we decided on pursuing another course—namely, that of running into Blacksod Bay, with the intention of landing near the picturesque ruins of Doona Castle. The idea met with general approbation; and the cutter having been put about, we ran with a flowing sheet towards the shore.

"And so you really spent a month in this desolate district?" asked Edward of our friend, when, about one hour later we were sauntering together along the sea-shore, and resting from time to time on the soft green herbage which struggles into life from out the yellow sand.

"Indeed I did, and enjoyed the life extremely; although I reached this place—by which expression

I mean the little inn at Achill Sound—in a gale of wind, and under torrents of rain which well nigh damped my spirit of adventure. There is a flat expanse of boggy valley on either side of the road, which extends for a considerable distance after leaving the beautiful mountain pass of M—— (we shall traverse it on our return), and I confess that while buffeted by the storm in that exposed and howling wilderness, I *did* half regret the step I had taken, and longed for the comfort of a good arm-chair, where (listening to the wind outside) I might congratulate myself on being sheltered from the blast."

"You came for sport, of course?" I asked. "Did you find anything worth the staying for? How were the grouse? and did you kill many fish?"

"The grouse were not plentiful," answered Philip. "Nor can one be surprised that such should be the case, for the birds are as tame in these mountains as barn-door fowl; and as, both from their nature and their necessities, the peasantry are ingenious plunderers, it is natural to suppose that they will both rob the nests, and take or kill the birds whenever opportunity offers. The salmon fishing, too, as is always the case in mountainous countries, is a very precarious sport, for the rivers empty them-

selves as quickly as they fill, and 'no flood, no fish,' is a truth perfectly indisputable."

"Then how did you pass your time?"

"In what way did you kill your month?" were our respective queries.

"In various interesting ways," was the rejoinder, "although in description they do not sound very lively. In the first place, I wandered over the desolate Achill Island, carved my name upon its one tree, and convinced myself of how impossible it must have been for the inhabitants of a region so resourceless to resist, in the extremity of their distress, the temptations of the converting missionaries. They had no remedy against starvation save the renunciation of their creed. And what was the result of those unreal though well-sounding conversions? But I need not dwell on this subject, for the fact is patent, that the famine-produced Protestant colony in Achill was a signal and lamentable failure."

"What a hopeless-looking district it appears to be," exclaimed Bertha.

"Hopeless indeed!" responded Philip; "and we may easily suppose that such *hopelessness* existed in the olden time: for 'to be sent to the Devil or Connaught,' is a saying that dates from some

centuries back, and shows, I think, that the *localities* were considered as something approaching to equality, as far as their unpopularity as places of punishment is concerned. But," he added, more seriously, "even this seaboard portion of the province, with its arid soil and its summerless climate, might, but for the shortsightedness and selfishness of its rulers, be turned to good account."

"The great difficulty, I imagine," was my remark, "lies, as we have often said, in the people themselves—in their unthriftiness, their idleness, and their incapability of pursuing a fixed system of any kind."

"There you are wrong," said Philip, "for the *greatest* difficulty lies in the impossibility of the people paying their rent, and making a decent living out of their small holdings. 'Land pays better to the landlord let in *small* farms,' is the argument doubtless used by many proprietors and their often omnipotent bailiffs. And they are right, or rather they would be so, if the very small tenants *did* pay, but unfortunately they don't, and can't; so the said landowners have to content themselves with little more than an innate consciousness of power, in that they esteem themselves great feudal lords over their miserable tenants, whose fate is too often

dependent on the will and pleasure of the viceroy under whose iron rule, in the absence of their actual landlord, they suffer the alternate miseries of struggle, suspense, starvation, and ejection."

"Love of such rule as this seems to be an old, old story in this country," said Fairholme, "for we read in history that in the days of the second Charles, 'the peasantry stood always liable to the caprice and humour of their landlords, and to have everything taken from them when he pleases to fancy;' and, indeed, it seems probable that it is this same love of rule and power which prompts the successors of those autocratic gentlemen to refuse leases to their tenantry, and——"

"That and the use and abuse which the said tenantry have been known *occasionally* to make of their rights, in cases where the rent paid amounted to the magic but often nominal sum of ten pounds yearly. The priests, as we all know, interfere mightily in elections, for the doing of which they receive their orders *direct from Rome;* and can we wonder that under these circumstances the landlords should take their own measures to prevent the consequence of an interference so *monstrous?* The fear of eviction is the best guarantee for the vote of a ten-pound tenant; for bribery and intimidation are

as rife *here* as in England, with this difference, that whereas in *our* country such little affairs are conducted *sub rosâ*, the *right* of a landlord over the so-called consciences of his tenantry is here discussed openly and unreservedly.

"And I am not sure," said Edward, "that the latter is not of the two the more respectable and honourable proceeding. But," he continued, "is it not terrible to think how small an incentive (under the present system) there exists for the peasantry to become industrious and (in their line) respectable members of society! They have no chance, at least in Ireland, of a better future. From day to day, and from year to year, their utter lack of home comforts remains the same; while still the daughters of the land, like beasts of burthen, labour in the wet bogs, bare-legged, and over-taxed. Thus their days pass on in *brutalising*, because aimless, toil, till 'hardened to hope, although anything but insensible to fear,' they sink into what their forefathers were before them—*id est*—mere clods, living on from day to day in the depths of dirt, and degradation; and, until of late years, of *ignorance!*"

"And what strange views some of the most generous and humane amongst the Irish landlords take of the best measures to be pursued for the

amelioration of their tenantry's condition! They cannot, they say, bring themselves to *degrade* their small farmers into the condition of English labourers! And they affirm that, though well aware of the disadvantage to themselves of a pauperised tenantry, they would rather endure the loss than be guilty of an act so barbarous! 'The frightful diminution of rent at the time of the memorable '47 Famine should,'—so said, one day, to me a landlord whose personal sacrifices at that period of misery will long be remembered through the land,—'have taught me the wisdom of abolishing my small holdings altogether, *but I have not the heart to do it.*' So reasoned a man whose logical powers are on most subjects above the average; but it seemed beyond him to understand that there is no separating the interests of landlord and tenant, and that on the prosperity of the one depends the well-being of the other."

"But," said Bertha, "the sight of the poor destitute families after a harvest failure, might make him see the matter in its right light."

"It might, if he *did* see them in their suffering condition; but this he rarely does. Moreover, he is probably assured by those in whom he places confidence, that his tenantry never were more flourish-

ing—an assertion which is most likely (in his opinion) confirmed by the undeniable fact that the union is not crammed with paupers, and that as yet the poor-rates have not sensibly risen."

"He forgets," put in Philip, "how intuitively every Irishman shrinks from saying unpleasant things, especially to those socially above him; nor has he generally the remotest idea of the terrible amount of privation which an Irish peasant will submit to rather than enter those dreaded walls, where, in separation from those who are near and dear to him, he will, in captivity, and what he considers shame, endure the weary punishment of unpitied pauperism."

"I have seen the struggle often," said Bertha, pityingly, "and watched them—

> 'Lean, and weary, and wan,
> With only the ghosts of garments on!'

struggling hopelessly against their coming fate. One after another, their small means of subsistence fail them. The pig is sold to pay the landlord, and the poor decaying furniture is parted with bit by bit, even to the bed on which they once lay all huddled together in their rags. If they can, they borrow money at ruinous interest, while last, and most painful sacrifice of all, the cow, which has

shared their home, and given them almost their only food, is driven to the nearest fair for sale, and soon the family is destitute indeed. An ounce or two of Indian meal once a day, a few limpets from the rocks, and may be some boiled chickweed—these are frequently their means of subsistence till the potatoes are ready for use; and deep indeed is the anxiety felt for the safety of the crop by those who are solely dependent for existence on a means so precarious."

"Precarious indeed!" said Philip; "for besides that, as we have often agreed, the climate labours under the disadvantage of having neither winter's frosts, nor summer's sun, the people cannot afford to enrich in any way the exhausted soil, while it cannot be denied that the seasons grow yearly more inclement. Scant food, and, if possible, still scanter clothing, with the turf 'melted on them' by reason of the constant rains—can we be surprised that fever with all its direful sufferings should supervene on privations so severe and unremitting, and that the cry for aid to those able to help them should be heard throughout the length and breadth of the land?"

"Which cry," said I, "will probably be unattended to, for the sympathies of the English people

were exhausted by the last famine, and the cry of Irish distress is never a popular one. There will be *talk* about tenant right, and some suggestions thrown out about relief from taxation, and there the matter will end."

"As to tenant right," said Gascoigne, "it appears to me, that besides the immense difficulties which would arise in carrying out anything so anomalous, there is the broad standing fact to be got over—namely, that a man's land is his own, and that if he lets it, he has a right to do so—as—*how*—and to whom he likes, without control or hindrance. No; the management of his poor tenantry; and whether they live in peace and comfort, or perish miserably, are matters to be settled between a landlord and his conscience, and between his conscience and his God. It is certain that men will not expend the sweat of their brow, and all their little capital on a holding, the rent of which will only be 'raised on them' for their pains; and this being the case, and it being evidently difficult to make the landlords understand that this province of Ireland is not calculated for the production of cereal crops, and the maintenance of a small and poverty-stricken tenantry, it behoves the English government, and failing them the philanthropic millionnaires of England, who have more

money than they know what to do with, to take the matter in hand."

"As how?" asked Edward and I simultaneously.

"Principally by the draining and reclaiming of some thousands of acres of waste lands which are now lying useless and profitless, and the turning which into grazing-land for herds of Highland cattle, would employ hundreds, ay thousands of starving people. Loans from Government for such a purpose can, as we all know, be obtained; but in cases —and they are very numerous—where the landlords either cannot or will not take advantage of this means for the bettering of the condition of the poor, and the improvement of his property, I would have the foolish man *coerced* for his own and his country's benefit."

"As how?" I asked.

"By an Act making a sale of such lands compulsory, at their existing value. This may appear in the light of an infringement of the rights of private property, or an arbitrary exercise of power: but have we not valuable precedents in the interference of the Government, when in the cases of railway lines the convenience only of the public was concerned? How much more so, then, should such rights be exercised when it is a question of actual

existence to thousands, to say nothing of our reputation amongst nations for humanity and good government?"

"And," said Fairholme, assentingly, "the workmen employed should, in my opinion, have the hope held out, of some individual benefit to accrue to them from their labour. Indeed, were I that unattackable machine called Government, I would make such a benefit compulsory before I advanced a shilling for the reclaiming of land, the value of which would be inestimable for grazing purposes. No land, however, not one inch, should be let in farms smaller than twenty acres, and I would endeavour to persuade every labourer that, in saving out of his wages sufficient for emigrating purposes lay his best chance of happiness and prosperity."

"It is difficult," I remarked, "to understand the reason of the lamentation over the Exodus of the Irish people. If they were made happy and prosperous at home, they would probably remain at home; and as for the priests, who are *of* them, and must and do sympathise with the calamities which they witness, why, in God's name let them go likewise, and exercise in another country the religious functions which are so ill-paid in this. Already—

and it is natural that it should be so—the necessities of their flocks are rendering the people less subservient to their clergy, and the latter have to increase in number and in awfulness the threats by which they enforce from their flocks the payment of their miserable dues. To be childless (a tremendous menace to the peasantry hereabouts), and to be turned into the beasts of the field, with horns and hoofs, are common judgments held *in terrorem* over the heads of the defaulters. To this condition, and in the hands of a priesthood whose own limited education and stern necessities compel them to such measures, has the short-sighted policy of England reduced this unhappy people!"

"But do you believe," was my next question, "that the Irish would, even in their own country, and in their own behalf, labour continuously, and according to any regular system of husbandry?"

"Indeed, I do believe so," replied Gascoigne, earnestly; "and who that has ever watched them when toiling on the acre of wild bog, which they feel secure of as their own, can doubt the fact? But there is, besides the one I have already mentioned, another means of utilising the labour, instead of pauperising such of the destitute poor as are able to work. They are wonderfully ingenious at all

manufactures—these misgoverned people. Why, then, should not Unions, under another name, be establishments where such capabilities might be brought to light, and use? The door of hope might thus be held open to the people, and many an advantage accrue to them and to the country."

"It has occurred to me," suggested Fairholme, "that in the species of draining you propose, a portion of what is called the pauper population might be, in some way or other, usefully employed."

"Certainly," rejoined Philip. "And there can be, I think, little doubt that the question of making such labour productive has, in Ireland especially, been shamefully neglected. To remove the present (in too many instances natural) dislike to the landlord would be a great advantage, not only to this country, but to its reputation in the world; but alas! the feeling is one that has been the growth of centuries, and forms part of an Irish peasant's natural inheritance. It is matter of history, that in the reigns of the early Edwards, the Irish "lower orders" petitioned for protection from the English laws, and also that they might participate in the privileges enjoyed by lawful subjects of the English

crown. Their oft-repeated request was denied them, nor can we marvel that, oppressed even in those days by that scourge of the country—'*Middlemen*'—they should have become the reckless enemies of those who refused to accept them as friends?"

"Do you recollect a passage in Spenser's History?" asked Bertha, addressing her husband; "a passage in which he describes a state of things very similar to that which existed in the ever-memorable year of '47? He says (I remember well the words): 'The Irish were brought to such wretchedness, as that any stonie heart would have rued the same. Out of every corner of the woods and glynnes they came creeping forth on their hands, for the legges would not bear them. They looked like anatomies of death: they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves: they did eat the dead carrions: yea, happy were they who could find them, and if they found a plot of cresses or shamrocks, there they flocked as to a feast for the time: yet not being able to continue long there withal.'"

"There were no Relief Committees in those days," remarked Gascoigne, "and no 'frinds' in America to send relief to their hungry brethren at home. Ah, well! I fear it will be always found difficult, not to

say impossible, to convince the masses of the people in England, and especially those in authority, that for all his calamities, for his ignorance, and his poverty, and even for his death by starvation and by fever, the Irish peasant has any one to blame but himself. Public opinion with us at home is against him, while *here* the tenant is too often regarded by the landlord as his natural enemy, and treated accordingly."

"It certainly does look like it," said Edward, smiling; "but still, in a general kind of unreasoning way, there are many who entertain very kindly feelings towards their tenantry, and who, with the exception of the sweeping changes we have been speaking of, would do a great deal to help them."

"Granted," said Philip; "but to set against the value of my concession, I cannot resist telling you that lately, in my hearing, one of the largest land-owners in the country, on hearing of the distress amongst the poor, gravely remarked that the sooner his tenantry were *pauperised* the better, as he would then be enabled to let his land at a much higher rent to Saxon settlers!"

"The times are, indeed, probably returning," said Edward, gravely, "when such wholesale changes of

tenants *must* perforce take place; but whilst we are still discoursing on the subject of Irish national characteristics, let me ask you whether it has never occurred to you as remarkable, that, although the upper classes in this country are amongst the foremost both to ridicule and disparage the qualities and peculiarities of the lower orders of their countrymen, those qualities and peculiarities are (and such is not the case in other civilised communities), though modified by circumstances, the characteristics of their own class and degree?"

"I perceive your meaning," answered Gascoigne, "but I confess to finding a difficulty in accounting for the fact to which you allude. In both, or rather in all classes, there exists undoubtedly that singular deficiency in moral perception which is perhaps caused by their being, after the manner of the softer sex (I beg your pardon, Mrs. Fairholme), incapable of close consecutive thought. The same 'wild Irish way,' too, pervades everything and every condition in this country, and it is to this that we may, perhaps, in part attribute the errors and mistakes in the government of their properties to which so many Hibernian gentlemen are subject. The love, too, of litigation, and the joining together in factions for the keeping up of petty and vexatious quarrels, are

equally discernible in Hibernians of all degrees; but whilst calling to mind such regrettable qualities as these, and attributing them, as we may in many instances do; to blunder-headed prejudice and to ignorance of human nature and of the world, we must never lose sight of the fact, that for many an excellent quality, and especially for their conspicuous practice of the grand virtue of generous hospitality, both the rich and the poor of this misjudged land of Erin stand conspicuous amongst the nations of the earth; while even now——"

"The poor are aiding the poor," broke in Edward, eagerly; "and many a landlord (although perhaps he knows it not) is receiving, in the persons of his suffering tenantry, charitable aid from their countrymen in distant lands, who can only give their mite! And not only from them, but from the many *humbler* charitable—from Canada, from France, and from the indefatigable Mansion House Committee, sums, inadequate it is true to the great demand, arrive for the sick and hungry, whose sufferings are so bravely borne."

"There are," said Fairholme, "(and of this fact I have long been convinced,) two great desideratums in this country, namely, public opinion, and an influential middle class."

" And truth," added Bertha, with that genuinely feminine disconnectedness to which Philip had just alluded. " For of that virtue there certainly is a terrible lack, though wherefore such should be the case I have never been able to comprehend."

" We must go very far back for causes, I suspect," said Gascoigne—" perhaps even to the fighting days of 'ould Ireland,' when cunning was above all things necessary for self-preservation, and when, as testimony to the unsettled state of affairs, only ten out of three hundred and odd sovereigns died a natural and respectable death in their beds! And then there followed the endless rebellions against English rule, and the dangerous teaching of their religion. Terrible times indeed had they, and none other; for what must have been the influence of the priesthood and their own blood-thirsty zeal when, on one occasion—on the dreadful St. Ignatius' day—they could be induced to massacre forty thousand Protestant men, women, and children?—the which act of treachery was amply, though far too indiscriminately, avenged. And think you that memories of such deeds are ever entirely wiped away, or that the hatred engendered by difference of race and creed has not borne, amongst its other bitter fruits, those of falsehood and treachery? Ever at war, and ever

unsettled;—lovers of law, to the loving even of its *chicanery*, and the tolerating (by the extensive use of that means of defence) its *lawless* expensiveness; —trusting to obtain by their own quick wits that which they cannot get possession of by force, or from the justice of their rulers; and taught by their priests, not only that falsehood is a venial sin, but that the keeping of a promise is merely a matter of expediency,—can we be surprised that lying should have become a habit in the country, and one of the distinguishing characteristics of the people in whom by long use it has been bred?"

"The vice we are speaking of being," said Edward, "one common to all thinly populated countries, and especially so amongst a people endowed with a propensity (as is the case with excitable and lively natures) to identify themselves so completely with the part they play, that they end by putting faith in their own false statements. But enough for the present of Hibernian errors and their many extenuating causes, for it is time that in the halls of the Lady Pirate, the 'proud invader' of her conquered country should take his midday meal; the meaning of which is that we three hungry English people are ready for our luncheon. So, Bertha dear, bestir yourself; and may the mighty shade of 'Grania

Waile'* look graciously on the cold collation of the Saxon."

* Grace O'Malley—a mighty Hibernian Chieftainess, and the Queen of Clare Island and its dependencies. She was possessed of much wealth and *many castles*, and about the middle of the sixteenth century she paid *a visit to*, and was well received by, Queen Elizabeth, who hospitably *invited* her to dinner.

CHAPTER XIII.

GRACE O'MALLEY—ACHILL ISLAND—THE PIRATES OF INNISKEA.

THERE was, it must be confessed, but a very small portion still remaining of Grace O'Malley's ancient castle. On one side only was the grey stone wall in even a tolerable state of preservation, but over the venerable surface of the ruins (and it was an ample compensation for the insecurity of their toppling grandeur) the trailing ivy drooped, clinging closely to the mouldering fragments, while many a fern and lichen added their quota of adornment to the picturesque and interesting place.

"She must have been a marvellously strong-minded woman, that same western Chieftainess," said Gascoigne, as, beneath the remains of her ancient splendour, we enjoyed our modern meal, after having cooked, over a fire of our own igniting, some of the fish caught within the precincts of her ocean dominions. "A curiously strong-minded

woman, indeed, if we may put any faith in the histories that are related of her."

" She is supposed to have been buried," suggested Bertha, " at the extremity of one of the small peninsulas which run into the Bay of Islands; and it is, of course, a haunted place. We have seen the grave, which is in a spot well suited to the wild nature of the sovereign who rests beneath the rocky pile raised long years ago to her memory. A gigantic woman, too, she must have been, for it is on record that each step she took was five feet long at the very least."

" I wonder what Queen Elizabeth thought of her," said Philip, " and in what manner the Celtic Chieftainess conducted herself at the court of the mighty sovereign who was so fortunate as to reign at a period when (as has been happily expressed by an Irish author) ' England had a Cecil for a minister, a Bacon for a lord chancellor, a Raleigh for a buccaneer, and a Sidney for a fine gentleman." *

" To say nothing of a Shakspeare for a poet," rejoined Fairholme. " But to return to Grania Waile. It is probable that the mighty monarch was in a tolerably good humour at the time of the Irish lady's visit, since, as is generally supposed, it took

* Aubrey de Vere.

place soon after the effectual quelling of Tyrone's Rebellion. There was, however, certainly very little 'love lost' between the two countries, for we read that, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth of happy memory, so great was the ill-feeling entertained in Ireland towards their English masters, 'that two sons of Lord Clanricarde did raise an insurrection in the town of Athenry, and put *all* the inhabitants thereof to the sword, because the said inhabitants had begun to conform themselves to English customs, and had shown dangerous symptoms of an inclination to lead a more civilised life than that which had satisfied the ambition of their ancestors.'"

"That comes of being what you call an 'excitable people,'" said Philip, drily; "and now, having finished our repast, what say you to a turn in that deplorable-looking burialground yonder, and to an endeavour to discover therein some interesting remains of antiquity?"

The cemetery towards which Gascoigne directed our attention was within sight of, and a couple of hundred yards distant from, the ruins. The path which led to it was choked up with tall rank nettles, and with luxuriantly-growing thistles and bramble-bushes; nor would it have been easy, save for the

black painted and rotting wooden crosses, to avoid treading on some of the innumerable mounds beneath which the dead were resting. It was a dark and dreary place, and the more so in that, amongst the unwholesome growth of weeds, large human bones gleamed white and cold. The evening was beginning to close in, and a few drops of chilling rain fell from the leaden-looking sky, whilst all around, borne on the wailings of the low-voiced wind, there seemed to come—

> "The weary sound, and the heavy breath,
> And the silent motions, of passing Death;
> And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
> Sent through the pores of the coffin plank."

"Let us leave this mournful spot," said Bertha, with a shiver, and with a cheek nearly as pale as the bleached remnants of mortality that lay around us; "it breathes of decay and death."

Fairholme drew his wife's arm within his own, and Gascoigne and I following, we left the place of hollow skulls and ghastly memories, for the breath of the open sea and the air that comes undefiled from heaven.

The next day we set out betimes on our long-meditated excursion round the island of Achill. Our mode of progression was on safe and excellent

ponies, bred on the island, and possessing great strength and powers of endurance. Happily the day was fine, or we should have had little to reward us for our exertions—the whole beauty of the scenery consisting in the magnificent and extensive sea view, which, in this country, is so often shrouded in mist.

Achill, as a whole, and till you begin to ascend the cliffs, contains little worthy of notice. We passed through two villages, from out the wretched hovels of which there rushed swarms of curious little begging savages, half clad and starved looking. They were very clamorous, hanging perseveringly upon our "skirts" for a considerable distance up the mountain.

The ponies, with the exception of that ridden by Bertha, were left at the village, in charge of a peasant whose services we had engaged for the day; and then, fortified by a luncheon, of which we had partaken, not in a ruined castle, but on the sands of the wild sea shore, we proceeded on our way.

For awhile the ascent was not steep, but it gradually became more precipitous, and as it did so, the narrow path drew nearer to the edge of the nearly vertical descent. It required a strong head

and healthy nerves to look down, without a feeling of giddy awe, upon the sea beneath; for at the height of a thousand feet the rocks are (as I have said) nearly vertical, and as the pathway is cut out of the steep mountain side, it is necessarily of no reassuring width.

Edward's hand never left the bridle of his wife's pony; and as he walked between her and danger I was struck by the contrast presented by his small, slight form, and the indomitable spirit with which love and an inborn energy of soul had made amends for the scant personal gifts that Nature had bestowed upon him.

Two hours passed away ere we reached the summit of Achill Head, but *that* gained we rested from our labour and looked around us. We were at an elevation of nearly two thousand feet above the sea, the sound of which, as it broke with its grand eternal music on the rocks below, came faintly to our ears, while the fishing-boats that were rocking on the waves seemed in truth diminished to a span! Beautiful in its repose was the sunlit Atlantic as we gazed across it to fix our eyes on the grand Clare Island mountain, on the cloud-clad heights of Muilrea, and the fairy-haunted Pins of Binnabola!

"And that is Inniskea?" I asked of Philip, as,

turning my glass in another direction, namely, northwards, I noticed a small island lying about two miles from the mainland.

"It is," he replied; "and a wretched little rocky place it is. There are two islets, as you may see, lying close together, each about half a mile in length, and so washed by the incessant dashing of the Atlantic waves, that the rocks of which they are formed have become curiously indented with creeks and inlets."

"And are they inhabited?"

"Indeed they are, and plentifully too, by a population the most wild, ignorant, and wretched that you can imagine. You have heard, of course, of the piracies committed along this coast—robberies of vessels laden with grain, or coal, as the case may be? Well, the aggressors are those miserable islanders; men who are in the last stage of destitution and misery—who see their children expiring of inanition and fever before their eyes, and whose priests have told them that to take from others in their extremity is no sin."

"I never heard," I remarked, "whether any punishment was inflicted on the much-to-be-pitied robbers, or whether any measures were taken to prevent a repetition of the offence."

"A fine of some eighty pounds was, if I recollect right, the award in the case of the grain-vessel piracy—a fine which the islanders cannot, of course, pay, and which will therefore, I conclude, be levied on the barony. The men themselves could not, I believe, be identified; besides, they were starving: —what more can one say?"

"And are there no police stations, or preventive service men, on the island?" asked Fairholme.

"None whatever."

"But they are *somebody's* tenants?"

"Of course they are; but whose I do not know: and if we wait for redress for such grievances as these till Irish members remember for what cause they *should* have entered the world of politics, I fear that a dozenth Chinese war, and a hundredth debate on the Reform Bill, will have run their course before anything effectual is done for this neglected country."

"But who," asked Bertha, "is the judicious and charitable individual of whom we have heard as a liberal benefactor to the population hereabouts?"

"He is a wise and good Christian from the East," answered Philip, as we rose to retrace our steps, "who knows the value of *employment* to these people, and who bestows it on them in plenty. Nor

is it by employment only that he does them service, for he opens their hearts by binding them closely to him by acts of kindness, by his care for them in sickness, and by his treatment of them as independent men when health and strength is theirs. Were there many such benefactors to Ireland as the man we speak of, this country would cease to be a blot on England's greatness, and her people would, I firmly believe, be no longer stigmatised as laden with the terrible vices of treachery and ingratitude."

We had descended the mountain, stopping occasionally to rest, and casting lingering glances, as travellers are wont to do on a lovely prospect which they are little likely to behold again, when Edward, leaning his arm on the neck of his wife's little steed, turned his face towards the radiant west, where the sun was setting in a golden glory, and said, half mournfully—

"It is there that we are bound, my Bertha; and, alas! how can we, short-sighted mortals, tell whether we four friends will ever stand together face to face again! Great changes are before us, at least so I am warned by a presentiment which never yet has failed me; but sometimes, Bertha dear, I almost feel as though the voyage we so much dread may be escaped, and that we may be allowed, after

all our trials and anxieties, to remain in peace at home."

"God grant it!" responded Bertha. "For peacefully as it stretches there before us, the sea is not, as we all know—to be trusted—and I am a very coward, Edward, and a sore burthen upon you with my sickly nerves and fancies! Can I also ever forget that it is from kin of mine you meet with this most inexcusable coercion, and that——"

"Hush, love," broke in Fairholme; "sufficient to the day is the evil thereof; and should it be our fate to traverse, ere many weeks are over, that trackless waste, the disposal of our lot will be in higher hands than his who thinks, that in setting forth upon our distant voyage, we are the tools of one as powerless as ourselves."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CHURCH UPON THE MOOR—COMING TRIBULATION —AGRARIAN OUTRAGES.

THE following day was Sunday,—another *rest day* from our not over-fatiguing sight-seeing labours,—and the last which we were likely to spend in the westernmost portion of this religiously distracted country.

The Protestant church (for there was one "in it," with a congregation which amounted to *six*) stood, and doubtless does so still, in an exposed situation, and on the dreariest of moors—on what, in short, may truly be called the very "abomination of desolation."

Having said this much of the site of the temple, some idea may be formed of the ministering priest thereof when I add, that his countenance was as gloomy and uninviting as the desolate region in which his lot was cast. His voice, too, sounded very drearily through the unfilled building, as he held

forth for the customary hour, not only against the "idolatrous Papist," but against the "rich" of all degrees and denominations.

"How hardly shall the rich man enter the kingdom of God." This was his text, and forty minutes at least of his discourse were employed in running over, with apparently intense satisfaction to himself, the long list of the excluded. So lengthy indeed was the catalogue, and so comprehensive, that I began to marvel to how many, besides his honoured self, he would permit the hope of being admitted hereafter into the kingdom of heaven.

That he was not subject to *one* of the weaknesses incidental to humanity I am willing to admit, for no smile crossed his dark face during the ludicrous, though trifling, episode which occurred during the service, and which I shall relate for the possible entertainment of my readers.

We—namely, that very small "remnant" of a Protestant congregation—had just taken our places, and were, with due reverence, hearing ourselves exhorted to our duties as "dearly beloved brethren" by the dark-browed missionary, when a dismal wail, as hollow-sounding as it was unexpected, echoed through the church. It was not in

human nature to resist turning round, in order to discover, if possible, the cause of the outcry. A very simple one it proved, being neither more nor less than the *low* of an animal common enough in the country, but an unusual visitant to a place of worship. Walking along the aisle, with solemn step and slow, came the "small black little cow," the good "poor man's baste," whose road had been mistaken, and who came (a not too well fed convert) to raise her voice among those of the reformed religion.

It was a ludicrous, and yet a solemn affair, both in the ingress and the exit of the patient-looking animal, yet we all kept our countenances demurely during her short visit; nor was it till we listened, as we left the building, to the comments of those outside, that we indulged in a passing fit of merriment.

"Bedad, Thady, but that's a great joomper entirely," said a Papistical peasant who, on his return from his own prayers, had been informed by a friend of what had occurred. "Whose cow is it at all?"

"It isn't mysel' as knows," answered Thady, sulkily.

"It's hersel 'll be having the name, by the blessing

of God," continued the first speaker, who seemed bent on being provoking. "And shure it's the minister 'll be putting the same in the *retoorns* to the society."

"Ah, musha, thin, bad manners to you," retorted Thady, "an' it's long before a Catholic cow will be going to the prayers of the likes of ye."

There seemed—though it is possible I might have been mistaken—no real reverence amongst any of the church-goers; nor could we wonder at the same when we heard, from the best and most undeniable authority, how little there was to respect in the character of the man who had been sent to preach the Gospel in that priest-ruled land. It was another instance of the truth of Edward's previous remarks on the little caution that was displayed in the selection of those whose every word and deed should be above reproach.

"But they are not all so unfortunately chosen," pleaded Bertha; "for even during *my* short experience, I have met with more than one willing and useful servant of his Maker,—men whose objects were simply to do good in their vocation and ministry, and who preached, without reference to individual creeds, the plainly understood duties to God and to our neighbour."

"'Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
But looks through nature up to nature's God!'

quoted Edward. "But I fear, dear Bertha," he added, "that the good which such missionaries as you have mentioned might effect, is entirely neutralised by the obligation they are under to subscribe to the rules of a set of men, who (well meaning as they doubtless are) can only be properly described as bigoted and short-sighted in the extreme. Oh! for the days when a spirit of love shall be the guiding one, and when righteousness and peace shall go hand in hand to comfort and to save those that are walking in darkness and in error!"

The time we had yet to spend together was growing short, and Edward had many business concerns to occupy his attention; nevertheless we resolved to devote one day to an investigation of the peculiarly neglected country that lies along the shore towards the little town of N——.

We had ordered a carriage to be in readiness for our use, and in it, on a clear, fresh September morning, we set forth on our expedition.

The road, where it runs along a narrow inlet of the sea, traverses a beautiful portion of the country; nor are there, I think, many views on this picturesque coast more worthy of admiration than the

heath-covered Pass of Moirhany. It is a very narrow defile between mountains clothed with the tall and rare plant known as the Mediterranean heath, and along the winding road you come upon many a little lovely dell half choked with the rich deep foliage of the waving heather.

Anything approaching to the evident misery of the population in this district it would be hard to conceive. There was no attempt at disguise or concealment, but, on the contrary, from out the wretched *tenants'* hovels—the dark smoky sties on the decaying thatch of which grass and weeds were flourishing, there rushed multitudes of mendicants, boys and girls (some of them indeed no longer children), who, in every phase of *quasi* nudity, supplicated clamorously for alms. It was a heart-moving sight, that of the lank bare limbs of the young Christian savages, whose almost only garment was their ragged shirt, and to whom shame seemed a thing unknown.

"Whose property is this?" asked Edward, of our better informed friend; "and who is the guilty individual who is morally responsible for this desperate degree of degradation?"

"I grieve to say that the landlord who takes rent from these wretched beings is an Englishman—

at least, I have been told so, but it is possible that I have been misinformed. It is indeed a foul disgrace to our countryman that he should be lord of such a land as this, for there can be no self-deception here. On other estates, even on the arid seaboard, a semblance of well-doing might, and does, deceive many a generous-hearted landlord into the belief that there exists amongst his tenantry no real distress; but here such a plea for blindness can neither be offered nor accepted."

"And you, who have lived amongst them, *know* of a certainty that the reports of the increasing distress of this part of the country are not exaggerated?" inquired Fairholme.

"I wish I could answer your question in the negative, but it is impossible; for distress—abject and apparently irremediable distress—is increasing day by day. A few years ago—some six, perhaps—there was a something that looked like a sign of better times among the poorer tenantry. At the fairs they might be seen, with their little bag of money in their hand, ready to purchase a 'baste' of some kind—a few lambs, perhaps, or a pig or two, as the case might be. *Now* all this has changed: the fairs are deserted, for the purse is empty; and not only that, but the 'bastes' are no longer to be seen in the

little holdings, for they have been 'driven' for rent and rates, or sold to supply the immediate necessities of the hungry ones at home."

"And with all this the landlords refuse to see their true interest in the matter," said I; "nor does it seem possible to convince them that a pauperised tenantry is a curse both to the land and to themselves."

"It is a curse, too," rejoined Audaine, "which falls upon so many, and in ways so various. The shopkeepers in the small towns feel it terribly, and are in this part of the country becoming rapidly involved in the common ruin. They struggle against their difficulties as long as struggling can avail, and many (in the hope that the potato crop will enable the peasant to repay the loan) supply him with food for his family's support. But, alas! there comes a bad season, a failure of the crops, no money either for the rent or for the debt, and all go to ruin together. The state of things is bad enough, I can assure you, *now;* but if another inclement season comes 'atop of them,' God bless the destitute tenantry, especially in the ever raining districts of the west!"

"God help them, indeed," repeated Edward, solemnly; "for the shelter of the 'Union' is all that

in their need will be offered them by man!* In regard, however, to the shopkeepers, I must confess that their keeping their heads above water at all has always to me been matter of surprise; for whence do they draw their profits? and whence comes the little money that circulates amongst them?"

"You may well ask," said Gascoigne; "and it is a question which I should be glad to put to every Irish landlord who spends the rent money paid by the neediest of tenantry on a soil that is not theirs. There are laws for greater potentates—laws which force them to reside on their dominions, and spend their revenue within its precincts; but for *these* there is no legislation save that of conscience, the dictates of which it is so easy both to brave and to evade."

"Yet many landlords live on their estates," remarked Bertha, "and spend both time and money in endeavouring to better (in every way) the condition of their tenantry. Surely those who do so

* To any one who has well considered the subject, the immense advantage of emigration over Union support must be evident. For the sum of five pounds the passage of a man across the Atlantic, together with his food during the voyage, may be provided; whereas his actual "support" (we say nothing of his clothing, fuel, &c.) cannot be estimated at a less cost than two shillings per week in the Union, that is to him a place so replete with the horrors of imprisonment and disgrace.

should not be joined with the rest in one common blame. Surely *they* deserve to meet with gratitude and affection from those whose interests they watch over."

"You are right," replied Philip; "and that, individually, they do meet with such returns I have little doubt, but at the same time I must maintain that individual feeling goes little way in counteracting the morbid, and now chronic, sense of *wrong* induced by the vast and ever growing pauperism of the country. You must, as I said, recollect the history of these people,—that for them there has never been a bright reality,—nor (eager by nature, and excitable though they be) has *Imagination*, with its comrade *Hope* (those powers 'that first unsensualise the dark mind'), ever softened the character or raised the aspirations of the 'masses.'"

"They certainly are also, by nature, a curiously mentally-constructed people. Kind-hearted—if we may judge of them by their tenderness to their families; generous—in proof of which we have but to count the sums yearly transmitted by successful emigrants to their friends at home; hospitable—for no wandering beggar but finds a welcome and a meal in the poor man's house; and brave—for in the world there are not better soldiers, either in the

hour of battle or in the still more trying periods of hardship and privation. And yet, with all these noble and not-to-be-denied characteristics, see how vile a reputation they have earned for themselves by the commission of the most cowardly crimes, viz., the cold-blooded murder of the defenceless, and the dooming to sudden despair the widow and the orphan."

"The crime, too, is so general," I said; "for all who either shelter the criminal, or are silent as to his whereabouts, are parties to the deed."

"The fact is," rejoined Philip, "that, very far from considering the assassination of a landlord or an agent as a crime, the peasantry view the deed as a noble resistance to oppression and tyranny. There is, I suspect, much of the same feeling of enthusiastic admiration bestowed upon the perpetrator of an Agrarian outrage as in former days was lavished by those who—

'Cursed in darkness, and made wild by want,'

looked on with glowing self-congratulation at the patriotism of a Brutus or a Corday. Whilst the murderer is in hiding, they feed, shelter, and protect him; and should justice succeed in bringing him to a well-merited punishment, he dies—according to

their belief, a martyr to a noble cause—the cause of the feeble against the strong, of the oppressed against their tyrants!"

"And the priests," remarked Edward, "also undoubtedly deserve to bear a portion of the odium that rests on the doers of these deeds of blood; for, though I am far from supposing that they are the instigators of the crimes, yet, without doubt, they sedulously keep alive the feeling that leads to their commission. Hatred to landlords has become a national feeling—general and all-pervading; it is in the air the peasants breathe, it is inculcated both in the details and the endurance of misery; and whilst their choice of evils (*good* they never hope for) lies between exile and the poorhouse, landlord murder will be hailed as a virtue, and its punishment will be recorded in their traditions as the martyrdom of a patriot."

"It is a difficult question to deal with," said Philip,—"perhaps *the* most difficult (though for its being so, whom have we to thank?)—namely, what is to be done in cases such as we have been discussing,—for eviction *must* apparently be the consequence of non-payment of rents, and such fearful aggressions must of course be visited with due retribution; and their repetition, if possible, prevented. *Pre-*

vention is better than cure, even when the cure is easily to be effected; but in the contrary case, the value of the motto is still more evident. That the rents are often (especially in the more weather-exposed and least fertile districts, and in the case of the smaller tenantry) far too high, is, I believe, an unfortunate fact; whilst I have every reason to suppose that the exaction of the rent is frequently made in a manner so hard and unconciliating, that it is ill calculated either to win the affections, or stimulate the exertions of the peasantry. Words kindly spoken, and encouragement cheerfully given, go far with a people who possess great natural sensibility and tact, and whose mercurial and ardent feelings would, if properly directed, lead them far away from the commission of any of the grosser sins."

"But, those sins once committed," asked Edward, "what measures would you advise to be taken in the districts where (as is ever the case with crime), one dire offence seems only the prelude to another perhaps still more horrible?"

"I would recommend *no* leniency," answered Gascoigne, after a pause which was evidently given to serious reflection; "for in dealing with these agrarian homicides it is of more than doubtful good. Better (though I confess the doctrine has a barba-

rous sound), better that one *possibly* innocent man should perish than that the dangerous fact of the liberation of a guilty one should be blazoned throughout the country! The award, too, of punishment for unsuccessful, though attempted murder, should be far greater than it is; and, above all, I would recommend that the police force stationed in the dangerous districts *should not be formed of Irishmen.*"

"Surely," said I, "you do not suspect that 'fine body of men' of any participation in the crimes that it is their duty to search into? I have always heard——"

"That they were above suspicion," interrupted Gascoigne; "nor have I any reason to suppose that you have been wrongly informed. At the same time it is only necessary to remember an Irishman's natural love of popularity, and his hatred to the *rôle* of 'informer,' to be convinced how far better it would be were the law officials natural enemies, instead of friends, to those who harbour criminals and defy the law."

"It is awful to think," said Bertha, "that such precautions should be necessary, and such severity warrantable, in a country so close to home, and which ought to be even as *we* are; nor can I help

believing that the fault lies, as you have said, as much in the rulers of the land as in the people they have so thoroughly misgoverned!"

"And this being so," said Fairholme, "and the evil having taken so deep a root, do not you agree with me in thinking that to remove the people (as far as such a measure is possible) from the soil where their prejudices have grown up so thick and strong, would be an inestimable benefit both to the owners of the land and the tillers of the same? The Irish (strong as is their attachment to home) have no dislike to, or dread of, emigration, especially when they go in numbers, and they leave no 'near friends' behind them. It would be better economy, too, for all hands, to let them go (their passage paid, and a blessing on their heads) to other and happier lands, where, instead of there being (as at home) two perishing souls to the acre, their labour would yield them a plenteous return, and their children after them would, probably, as denizens of another country, prosper in the land of their adoption."

"And for the landlords, they would see, at last, that the feeding of a 'beast' on the land for which the miserable forty shillings rent was previously exacted, yields a far larger and more sure return, to say nothing of the escape from that wearing

anxiety which every feeling heart must undergo, when he dwells upon his tenants' wants and his own heavy responsibilities."

We had proceeded so far in a discussion which to many will, I fear, have seemed both long and tedious, when, on descending the side of a rather steep hill, a portion of the pretty town of W—— broke upon our view.

"What a lovely country it is," said Edward, "and how much of varied beauty have we, in these short three days, been called upon to admire! Nature, too, has blessed the inhabitants of the land (even as you have said) with noble hearts and kindly instincts. From the highest even to the lowest we can trace these gracious gifts, and yet——But why revert, in our regret for the melancholy *present*, to aggravating reflections on what might have been? For me, Ireland, with all her faults, will ever have an absorbing interest. It is the birthplace of the mother whose gentle voice and tender smile soothed my sickly childhood; and when Memory, in the far-off country where we are bound, will (like a spirit sweeping over 'Time's wild harp') make sweet and mournful music, then, dearest Bertha, we will breathe a prayer for the land that we have left, and for the kind, warm hearts

to whom we shall have bid, perhaps, a last farewell."

I watched the countenance of my dear old friend as he uttered the concluding words, and on his broad brow and deep-set eyes there was a look so earnest that even his lineaments seemed speaking; I noticed, besides, a strange rhythm in his sad words, as though he were one of those gifted mortals who are "cradled into poetry" by sorrow or by wrong; and to whom it is given to divine the secrets of a mysterious and darkly-looming future.

CHAPTER XV.

DEPARTURE—PHILIP GASCOIGNE'S PHILSOOPHY—KILMAGRASTHA CASTLE.

THE autumn months had nearly passed away, and dreary November, with its chilling winds and cloudy skies, was "upon" us, when the day arrived for Edward Fairholme and his wife to bid farewell to the cottage by the loch side, and to the scenes which were endeared to us all by many a pleasant memory. I will not dwell upon our parting, which was, in truth, but a temporary one, for we had engaged to meet again at Queenstown, to which port *they* were to proceed by land; whilst Gascoigne and I had agreed to sail round the coast in the "Humming Bird" to the place of our friends' embarkation for the New World.

The weather for the time of year was very mild and temperate; and as the voyage, under only tolerably favouring circumstances, was not likely to be a long one, the lateness of the season was

forgotten whilst we made our preparations for departure.

A favourable breeze from the south-east carried us (on the day succeeding that on which our friends left the cottage) down two-thirds of the lovely bay, and then, infinitely to our discomfiture, the wind fell suddenly, and we were left becalmed upon the placid waters. It seemed, however, as though a kindly fate had provided that our last impressions of a locality which possesses such endless varieties of beauty should be associated with all that was melancholy and tender; for never did I see the aspect of both earth and water more bountifully crowned with loveliness. Everywhere, indeed, did Nature appeal to us for admiration and for wonder. There was upon the sea (as we lay beside the grand old mountain king) not a ripple or a curl; and in the undimmed watery mirror we could see the rocks and yellow seaweed—the bird with snowy plumage perched motionless upon the overhanging rock, and every leaf of verdant ivy that clung to the dark grey stones, as clearly as those seen by us on land! Where, we asked ourselves, was the line which parted things tangible from those unreal? For as golden seemed the ocean leaves that grew beneath the sea as those which fringed the rocky line that

bordered it; and not less green was every blade of grass we looked on in the emerald depths, than the herbage cropped by the quiet sheep on the steep hill-side. Verily, it was a wondrous sight, and matched well the solemn stillness which, as is for ever the case in these almost depopulated wastes, was only broken by the plaintive whispers of the lonely curlew or by the flutter of the low-flying cormorant as it darted swiftly past our little vessel.

As Collett had foretold, we lay there motionless for two hours and more, for there was no wind till the tide began to flow; but then it rose suddenly, and soon carried us swiftly beyond the harbour's mouth, during which time there was silence between us, as we cast many a lingering look at the glorious mountains we were leaving. Miles away they were, those towering summits that look for ever down that curious inland sea; and over all the now dark canopy of the November sky fell heavy as a pall.

"There's bad weather coming, sir," said Job, rather anxiously, as I thought, as he cast his eye to windward. "Uncommon dirty sky over them mountains to the east."

"The wind's pretty fair for us, though," said Gascoigne, looking round him; but even as he spoke

Collett gave a sudden order (which was as instantly obeyed) to "haul up the tack."

It was well he did so, for a tremendous squall that he had seen approaching us (as though with giant strides) over the ink-black water, struck the little cutter heavily on her side, and lowered her in the water to her bulwark's edge. On she rushed, half buried in the sea that streamed upon her deck, but flying through the water with the speed of steam. For a few moments only this wild gust lasted, and during the momentary lull that followed reefs were tied and all made ready for the coming storm. How grand it was, and how magnificently the thunder boomed from crag to crag of the stupendous rocks around! The lightning flashed from out the heavens, and played upon the shrouds of our frail barque, while the rain, descending like a waterspout, almost hid the patient Collett from our view, as from the shelter of the *companion* we gazed out upon the storm.

At last it subsided, that most unlooked-for tempest, and the clouds gradually clearing away, we found that we had left the mountains of the "Wild West" behind us, and that we were advancing, well and steadily, on our course.

It was decreed, however, that we should not

pursue that course without let or hindrance; for, ere another half hour had elapsed, the wind chopped suddenly round, and a change of purpose, at least for the nonce, was absolutely necessary.

"We have plenty of time before us," suggested my companion, "and as the wind is falling, let us land at T——. It is a very curious old place, that castle, lying half in ruins among the hills; and I have an especial interest in it, as it belonged to a member of my mother's family—a disreputable old fellow enough—whose widow, for he has been dead something less than six months, has announced her intention of tardily providing an heir to the estate."

I had been told something of this story from Fairholme, and having been strongly impressed by the evil I had heard of the intriguing Chieftainess, who was a woman of low degree, and mercenary in the extreme, I could not help expressing to Gascoigne my envy of his stoical philosophy.

"For," I said, "I understand that, failing the birth of that child, *you* will be the heir; and I confess that, though perhaps not much more avaricious than the generality of my species, I could not, were I in your place, contemplate without annoyance the probability of that woman's son reigning in the ancient castle of my ancestors."

Gascoigne laughed. "If you had seen more of Irish dominions," he said, "you would scarcely think them incompatible with some lack of dignity, either in the person or the family of their owners. I should have been happy had my wonderful uncle been still alive, to have introduced you to the 'fair' estate in which I have a reversionary interest. There exists many a legend of its ancient greatness, and on the land are some old ragged true retainers, who, with the never dying instinct of their country, and drawing still, though with feeble breath, on their inexhaustible store of softest 'sawder,' will tell you of the days when the grand O'Shaughnesseys held high sway in Kilmagrastha. When, on the now black and treeless bogs—

> 'The war note peal'd through the gorges green,
> And the black pines echoed the mourner's keen;'

and when, in the wide old halls, there was a welcome and a meal for all who chose to ask for hospitality."

"And an orthodox Banshee outside to prepare the family for the twelvemonth's mourning for the head of the family?"

"Exactly. There is a certain old Conn Murphy, who is a dead hand at that sort of thing. Full of

poetry, too, the old fellow is, and will tell you tales without end of the wild spirits by which the water and the land around is haunted. His cowardice passes all belief, and if he has the remotest idea that the great sea-horse, who inhabits the lake before the castle, will raise even a hair of his long white mane above the surface of the water, nothing will induce the pusillanimous Conn, who, by the way, is by profession a Keeper, to show the tip of his thin nose beyond the castle gates."

"Is there much appearance of poverty on the estate?" I asked. "Old O'Shaughnessey, I conclude, took little personal interest in his people's welfare; but to a man of his fortune, it must have been so easy to employ a sensible and active agent—one capable of carrying out improvements—so easy to open his eyes, and see that his wishes were obeyed——"

"But, at the same time, so extremely difficult for a man of seventy-five—a very useless old man too, for he was verging on second childhood—to contend successfully against the will of a woman comparatively young, and of so determined a nature as is the second Lady O'Shaughnessey. He has spent next to nothing on his estates for the last ten years, and all this penuriousness is her doing, for he mar-

ried without a settlement, and as the estates are strictly entailed, she could only save out of the rents for her future provision."

"Which she must have done to some purpose," I remarked. "But how about the will? Nothing has publicly transpired concerning it, and the accumulations were, I heard, considerable."

"There is a mystery about the whole affair," said Gascoigne in reply, "which does not seem likely to be fathomed. She—Lady O'Shaughnessey, I mean—has had two of her relations staying with her for some time past; a brother and a sister they are, two as clever intriguers as I ever met with. The brother is, or rather was, a lawyer's clerk; a little dapper fellow, neat in his dress, sharp as a fish-hook, and about as dangerous to meddle with. But enough of the dirty tools, for the very thought of them convinces me that I am not as philosophic in this matter as you imagine. It will be hard to turn over the old retainers to the tender mercies of such a dynasty as the anticipated new one; and, besides, there is a pang in the reflection that, arid, wild, and miserable-looking as is the old estate of moor and mountain, I may never look again upon its rugged features, nor carry out one of the many plans I had devised for its improvement!"

"But," I asked, "would you, in the event of your succeeding to those estates, be willing to live upon them? Would you have no fears for your own safety whilst carrying out the theories you have advocated? Think how many have entered upon their successions with the same intentions, the same hopes, and remember how signal has been their failure!"

"We all think ourselves wiser than those who have trod the same path before us," said Philip, "and I don't set up for an exception to the rule. The number of those, however, who have failed antecedent to our attempts, is greatly in favour of our chances of success. We can, if we will, avoid the rocks on which they have split, and the currents in which they have been engulphed. I do not say that the character of the Irish, as it has been formed by adverse circumstances, is an agreeable one to deal with; and it is far pleasanter to do the necessary charities for the poor of the country at a distance and by deputy. But my experience tells me that *here*, whatever may be the case in England, affection is not gained, nor allegiance willingly paid, unless *intimacy* be established. It is not enough to send money to the poor; it is not enough to pay regal-like visits to their cottages, wearing an

insulting look of prosperity; and leading perhaps by the hand (a sight which I have more than once witnessed) a magnificent young heir to the glories of castle, mountain, bogs, and cabins."

"The which young gentleman," said I, "clad in his lordly 'braverie,' is in mocking contrast to the naked misery of those, at whose thresholds (for it is not every aristocratic nasal organ that can endure the complicated noxious effluvia of an Irish hovel) he is brought to show himself."

"Yes; it certainly is not by visits such as these that the affections of the poor are gained; and the quick-witted Irish especially see at a glance that condescension is intended, and are aware that the gracious smile of affability conjured up to the countenance, is a tribute to the visitor's own powers of ingratiating himself, and not the genuine evidence of a kindly heart. No; the way to gain the hearts of the poor is to make *them* feel *at home with you*, and that is a result forbidden by our conventional laws of dignity and self-respect."

"They are difficult people to 'get hold of,' if I may be allowed the expression," was my next remark; "difficult to understand, and difficult to theorise on."

"As is the case with all natures that have

strongly opposing characteristics," responded Gascoigne, "a complication of disorders, each of which requires a widely different mode of treatment, naturally decreases the chances of a cure; and so it is with the Irish peasant, who is at one and the same time hospitable and penurious—brave and cowardly—reckless and religious. Many of their bad qualities result from the good that have run into the madness of extremes, and than these there are few things more dangerous and difficult to deal with."

"And," said I, "is it not remarkable, that while striving (and it is to be feared in no impartial spirit) to account for the peculiar species of homicide which from time to time has disgraced Ireland, so little should ever be said of the nature of the people, and the way in which that nature is worked upon by the singularities of their misgovernment. The columns of the English daily papers teem with accounts of murders—murders committed in the 'open day' (that dire aggravation of crime in this country), murders on feeble women, on the old, the unoffending, and the helpless—murders committed for the gratification of the lowest passions of our nature, for greed of gold, and, in some cases, from the mere love of shedding blood alone. But for all these horrifying details, there is no wholesale con-

demnation of the community at large. Murder is not described as the '*fashion* and the delight' of England. We are not told that 'the society of the land is diseased,' or that a 'reign of terror' is desolating the country. But for Ireland, and for the far resounding aggressions against the higher ranks that *there* are sometimes rife, too much odium cannot be poured, and too many anathemas cannot be hurled! Well can one understand the detestation of a country where the lives of the rich are not in safety, and often must we all have felt a sudden glow of anger against the assassin, whose victim fell a sacrifice probably to the offences of a class; but for all this, and for all the brilliant weapons of satire, contempt, and aversion, which in the English press are brought to bear upon these people—for all that we are told of the cessation of religious differences, and of the total absence of *cause* for the outrages which we all must so deeply mourn over, few can deny the fact that for a chronic malady, there must be a long-standing and a deep-laid cause, and that for that chronic malady the great cure consists (to pursue the medical simile) in the *relief of irritation.*"

"He was an ingenious landlord," remarked Gascoigne, with an apparent wish to enliven the subject,

"who informed his tenantry that in the event of his death by violence, every one of them would, by the provisions of his will, be summarily ejected. What care all the fellows must have taken of him! He might have had a body-guard of the 'finest pisantry in the world' for nothing. I should recommend my Lady O'Shaughnessey's relations, if they take up their residence eventually at the old castle, to adopt the same plan. They'll require some sort of protection, I fancy, for I can hardly imagine the little attorney going about with armour under his tight-fitting garments. From what I can learn, though, he will be a match for them in cunning, however he may fall short in physical courage."

By the time that Philip had ceased speaking, the Yacht had come to an anchor, and the boat being lowered we were rowed on shore.

The landing was effected at a small pier or jetty, built for the convenience of the fishing-boats, many of which belonged to the inhabitants of the village —a collection of mud hovels, which had been visible from the sea. It was a wild scene enough, and the signs of human life were few, although along the shore the fires lighted at intervals betrayed the presence of the kelp-burners.

The castle which *might* one day be Philip's was a

half-ruined-looking building, standing, as most Irish castles do, close to the cabins of the family serfs.

"It is not a particularly cheerful or commodious-looking residence," remarked Philip, as we passed the gates. "But the income wrung from the poor tenantry is a large one; and before the old man married, and when—when I was engaged to poor Edward's cousin—I used to build many a pleasanter Castle in the air than that one looks on land—castles in which the poor girl took the prominent place—and we were to be as happy as wealth and consideration could make us. But everything has changed since those days, and I have learned to value at its just worth the homage and the lip-deep attachment everywhere paid to, and felt for, the owners of rank and riches; and whilst I have seen my fellow-creatures bending lowly before those in power, I have convinced myself, that however apparent was their admiration and devotion, they were in reality anything but friendly to the men by whose position relative to themselves they were kept in an attitude so cramped and unnatural. There are of course moments when the old man (like the oppressive elderly gentleman who clung so closely round Sindbad's neck) is hard enough to put away; and in those moments my appreciation of

the pleasures and advantages which riches can bestow, are great as ever. But in my yearly more frequent lucid intervals—in the many hours when I can enjoy the actual present, with no intrusive longings after the uncertain future—the power is mine to think with actual gratitude of the poverty by which I have been enabled to test the sincerity of *some* human beings; and I have ceased to long for the wealth which would probably have rendered me distrustful of their truth."

It was in converse such as this that we whiled away the hours; nor did the time seem long (at least to me) that we thus passed together. Gascoigne—as I could perceive—was far from being in his usual spirits; but for his comparative depression I could fully account, and as completely sympathise with the regretful feelings he expressed when dwelling on the approaching departure of our mutual friends.

CHAPTER XVI.

CYRIL VERNON—"VENGEANCE IS MINE."

On the morrow, the small amount of wind which blew being still unfavourable, we decided on walking along the shore, a distance of some half-a-dozen Irish miles, to a small town, the property of the O'Shaughnesseys, which lies inland a short distance only from the sea. The day was only tolerably fine, for occasionally the fine mountain mist thickened to a brisk rain, and soaked into our garments; still, however, we continued our walk, while Philip was led, by I know not what impulse, to dilate more largely than he had hitherto done, upon the sad events which had occurred at Westfield, and on the gross turpitude of Father O'Donovan's conduct.

The subject was to both of us an engrossing one, and so entirely did it occupy us that we came suddenly, and without having been previously aware of his approach, upon a human figure, walk-

ing, as we ourselves were doing, leisurely along the sands.

At that moment the rain was descending heavily, but the pedestrian, whose hat was drawn low over his eyes, seemed neither to heed nor care for the pelting of the shower, for he walked slowly on, with a large umbrella carried unopened in his hand.

"What a strange looking figure," exclaimed Philip, "and how singularly he walks!"

We were by this time within a few yards of the object of our curiosity, when Gascoigne, suddenly stopping, cried out loudly—

"Good God! Mark! It is Cyril—Cyril Vernon!" and having so said, he hurried forwards to greet the brother of his lost love.

No glad response, however, followed on the part of the unhappy young man whom he had accosted; but only a blank look, which proved that he had not recognised his friend, and a shudder, as though of fear, as Gascoigne placed his hand upon his shoulder.

"Cyril—dear old fellow—don't you recollect me? I am Philip Gascoigne; and Eva—where is Eva?" he asked, with what was evidently a painful effort, but he seemed to think the name might arouse in

the unfortunate Cyril some sleeping memory of the past.

It was all in vain, however, nor could even a syllable be extracted from the poor fellow, till the name of Father O'Donovan, which I rashly uttered, caused him to shiver from head to foot, while he commenced in hurried tones one of the penitential prayers in Latin.

"What shall we do with him?" said Philip, in despair. "He looks half dead with cold and wet! If we could only get him into a house where he might warm and dry himself."

"Not a house," muttered Cyril, "not a house. Father O'Donovan ordered me never to go into a house; and I've been years walking about up and down—out of doors—always out of doors."

"Where did you come from last?" asked Philip, pityingly.

"From the Convent," shouted the poor creature, with a wild, unnatural laugh of triumph; "I cheated them all then. It was at the Convent, you know," he added, in a whisper, "that I cut open Edward's arm, but I couldn't get the letters. Father O'Donovan keeps them,—the letters *she* wrote to me when I used to sing to her,—sing about the devils, you know, the devils who will come and take me; but I

shall go to *her*. I shall see lovely women there, and get the letters. Ha! ha! ha!" and with another horrid laugh, which ended in a still wilder scream, he sunk down (before we could arrest his fall) in a fit upon the Strand!

We lifted him from the ground, and bore him (he was scarcely heavier than a child of ten years old) to the nearest cottage, which having entered, we laid our burthen down upon the straw-covered bedstead.

"Och musha, thin," cried two or three women who were crouching about the turf embers; "Och musha, thin, it's desthroyed intirely he is!" And they were beginning their usual wild, keening cry, when I cut it short by asking if there was a doctor in the town.

"Troth and there is not," answered one of the women; "there's not one in it but a docthor that comes onst a week to the dispensary, and that was yesterday, yer Honour."

We did what we could for the unhappy victim of Papistical rapacity. We chafed his clay-cold hands between our own, and Philip tried to pour between his clenched teeth a few drops of spirit, from a small flask he had about him. Then Gascoigne hung over him with all a woman's tenderness, as thoughts (I

am sure that so it was) of his lost Eva, whom the poor boy so much resembled, came thickly thronging back to his oppressed and memory-haunted heart.

Yes, we did our best for him; but that best was all in vain, for long before the daylight dawned, and hours before the arrival of the doctor, whom we had sent for, could arrive, the frail and suffering body of poor Cyril Vernon returned "to the earth as it was," and the purified spirit unto God who gave it.

We buried him next day in the dank and dreary cemetery where the poor of his creed were lying in heaped-up hundreds, and sadly we left him on that desolate shore, alone.

"Better so," said Philip, as with full hearts we turned away from the place where we had laid him. "He is released from suffering, and the brother that my poor Eva loved is at rest at last."

"And Edward Fairholme's search is over," I rejoined. "But, Philip, should we not have apprised him of this? Should we not have allowed him the choice of following his poor young cousin to the grave?"

"To what end?" answered Gascoigne. "A message to inform him of what has occurred could

but have harassed and distressed him, and he could have done no good. Now we can break the truth to him gently; and, if I mistake not, when Oswald Tremlett hears of the power evidently possessed by that dangerous priest of injuring his dead mother's reputation, he will deem it wiser to let things remain as they are, and will abandon all thoughts of litigation."

It was in surmises such as these, and in conjectures regarding the Convent from which poor Cyril had escaped, that we were employed during the short time that the voyage to Queenstown occupied. It was a melancholy period, for although Time was doing its work, and reconciling Philip to the loss of his beloved one, yet all his grief-wounds had been re-opened by the melancholy end of Cyril Vernon, and by the associations which the sight of him had re-awakened.

"So that is Kinsale?" he said to me, when, after a long survey of the land, he laid down the glass, and turned with a heavy sigh away.

"Yes!" said I, "and very soon we shall be with poor Fairholme and his wife again, bearing the intelligence that their exile will no longer be enforced. I confess that I half dread the telling of our news, Gascoigne, for Edward loved poor

Cyril dearly, and always indulged in a hope that he would one day see him again, and——"

"*Not* clothed in priestly garments, but in his right mind," said Philip, with a sad smile. "Ah! how differently all has turned out, and how completely every happy anticipation has been scattered to the winds! And to think that to the last moment he knew neither of us, and only uttered those few words which will in all probability shield his worst and deadliest enemy from well-merited punishment."

"Hardly so," I said, in rejoinder; "for even the daring of a Jesuit priest would, I think, fail him, were he to be threatened with the public exposure of his delinquencies. And we have now such strong evidence against him: The assault on Fairholme, and the attack of that poor mad boy, excited into delirium by the terrible influence of his spiritual conscience keeper; the kidnapping, too (for we can call it by no other name), of his unfortunate victim; and, last of all, Cyril's miserable death with those condemning words upon his lips. All these circumstances combined will, I suspect, bring Priest O'Donovan to terms, and will induce him to surrender his ill-gotten gains, including the letters which (if we can place any confidence in the raving

assertions of poor Cyril) the villain has retained in his possession."

"I have little doubt," said Philip, musingly, "that all the information afforded us in those few last sentences which Vernon was able to string together is thoroughly to be relied on, with the exception of the length of time that his wanderings had lasted. It is natural to suppose that O'Donovan, after having reduced his convert to a state of idiocy by his threats, and by the austere habits to which the poor boy had been condemned, kept him closely immured in some convent, whence it was difficult for his victim to escape. I feel almost convinced, too, that amongst the stringent rules laid down by O'Donovan previously to the poor boy's removal to the place of his incarceration, one was, that Cyril should enter no house,—for fear, in all probability, of his making confessions dangerous to the Church, and of his being protected by those who might witness and take compassion on his miserable state."

"In the meantime," I rejoined, "poor Cyril's weakened mind dwelt, with a pertinacity fully to be accounted for by the absence of other impressions, on the events which immediately preceded what would seem to have been a total failure of his reasoning powers."

"True—sadly true, indeed! As for instance, his boyish love and admiration for that vain, foolish Mrs. Tremlett, whose craving after sentiment led her to encourage his passion; and," continued Gascoigne, thoughtfully, "there was, notwithstanding her forty years, something fascinating to a foolish lad like Cyril in the well-preserved beauty of that middle-aged syren. But, to my thinking, it was the constantly-sustained mental struggle in a mind naturally far from strong, which broke down the barriers of reason, and changed poor Eva's harmless young brother into a raving lunatic. God!" he exclaimed, with solemn earnestness, "if I could see that wicked, dangerous man but once! Could stand before him face to face, and tax him with his villany! No hands but mine should inflict his punishment; for what, compared to his deserts, would be the award of the jury which will, in case of a prosecution, find him guilty? and——but I am insane to rave in this fashion," he added, checking himself, and speaking in a calmer tone, "for vengeance for wrongs so black is in higher and mightier hands than ours; and, either in this world or the next, those whom that merciless and rapacious priest spared not will be fully and satisfactorily avenged."

CHAPTER XVII.

ARRIVAL AT QUEENSTOWN—FATHER O'DONOVAN'S ARREST.

When the "Humming Bird" cast anchor in Queenstown Harbour, only four-and-twenty hours were to elapse before the departure of the steamer which was to convey Edward Fairholme and his wife across the Atlantic.

"In a few minutes," said Gascoigne, as, mounted on an outside car, we were rattled away to the hotel where our friends were abiding—"in a few minutes they will have heard our sad and strange intelligence. And what a change for them! I can imagine, after the first regret will have subsided, no greater relief than it will be to poor Mrs. Fairholme to feel that her husband's long trial of suspense and anxiety is over, and that, delicate as he is in health, he will be spared the long voyage and wearying search so greatly dreaded by them both."

"But supposing that Oswald still perseveres in his intention of instituting legal proceedings?"

"'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' We can but hope the best, and trust that he will refrain from dragging his mother's and his sister's names into public and painful notice."

The evening had quite closed in when we arrived at the hotel, and on inquiring for Mr. Fairholme, we were told that he was out—was not far distant, the waiter said—had probably gone for some "commands" into the town.

"I will go in search of him," said Philip, "while you can prepare Mrs. Fairholme for the hearing of our important intelligence."

There was an amount of noise, bustle, and confusion in the entrance and passages which could only be found in an Irish hotel, and on the eve of an Atlantic steamer's departure; so it was scarcely surprising that, owing to the mistake of a bewildered and apparently half-distracted waiter, I should have been ushered into an apartment which was *not* the one I desired to enter.

The room was large and dimly lighted, and, at the first glance, I imagined it to be unoccupied; but I was mistaken in this idea, for on approaching the sulkily-burning coal-fire, with the intention of

drawing for warmth on its scanty resources, I perceived that the high-backed old-fashioned chair that stood before it was not without a tenant. He (for it was an individual of the male species, who in his comfortless seat seemed wrapped in the gloomiest of reveries) appeared a total stranger to me, nor could I—for the idea of a mistake on the part of the bustling waiter did not at the moment suggest itself—account for his presence in what I concluded, naturally enough, to be the private apartments of my friends.

I made my approach to the fire without any suspicion of being an intruder; moreover, I even went the length of stirring the smouldering embers into a blaze, before I perceived, by the flickering light which burst momentarily forth, that the possessor of the room was a Roman Catholic priest.

At the moment of my discovery, it being, I suppose, the stated time for such a service to be performed, a half-ragged official came into the room, and with a magic touch, turned upon the scene a perfect blaze of gas, which lighted up every distant corner, and revealed to me the dark and astute countenance of Father O'Donovan!

That the recognition had been mutual was evidenced by the sudden flush which spread over

his sallow cheek as he rose from his chair, and made me a ceremonious bow, betokening, by its awkwardness, the confusion of his mind.

For a few moments we both remained silent, for surprise on my part rendered speech impossible; but the priest speedily recovered himself, and with a ready audacity, which, I must confess, excited my admiration, he inquired, with perfect composure, after the health of our mutual *friends!*

He was a man of the world, certainly, as Fairholme had described him, or he never could so immediately have entered into the spirit of the part he was to play.

"And how is our eccentric friend, Fairholme?" he said. "Fishing, I have heard, somewhere in the west. I used to fancy that he did not care about that kind of thing; but we know he was always changeable in his habits. You have fallen in with him, probably?"

During the priest's speech I had had time to collect my scattered thoughts; and although I confess that my first impulse had been to hurl his evil deeds in his teeth, after the manner threatened by Philip Gascoigne, yet a few minutes' reflection convinced me of the folly of such a proceeding, and I resolved, pending the arrival of those better qualified

to express their resentment, to keep silence, at least from *bad* words.

"Mr. Fairholme," I replied, stiffly enough, "has been spending some time in this country, and I have had the pleasure of being his companion."

"Ah! And were you not surprised to find him here? A philanthropic freak, was it not?—religious Don Quixotism—fighting windmills in the wilds of Connaught!" and he laughed slightly, an embarrassed, *forced* laugh, I thought; whilst I, to my great relief, was saved the annoyance of a reply by the opening of the door, and the entrance of Gascoigne.

For a moment, as the priest's face was turned towards him, the two men confronted each other in silence; and then, to my infinite surprise, Philip, of the extent of whose effort to command his passion I had afterwards an opportunity of judging, turned, and left the room, after beckoning me to follow him.

"Go back," he said, in a voice so changed by concentrated emotion, that I had some difficulty in believing it to be his. "Go back, and keep an eye upon that man. Do not lose sight of him for a moment; and if you, Mark, do your part of the work well, he shall not again escape us!"

"But what is your object? and for how long a time am I to mount guard over this dangerous priest?"

"Only till my return, which will be speedy, with a warrant for his arrest."

"A warrant for his arrest? Why, Gascoigne, you cannot have forgotten the cogent reasons for keeping all this odious business quiet—you cannot have forgotten that——"

"I have forgotten everything," exclaimed Philip, almost angrily, "save and except the villany of that priest—poor Cyril's fate, and the destruction of mine and Eva's happiness. But go back now—I shall not lose a moment, nor will I run the risk of a meeting with Edward Fairholme, which might tend to weaken my resolution."

He was gone before I could venture on another word of remonstrance, and for a moment I stood looking at the empty place where he had stood, and wondering what next I was to do. Should I return to the room I had lately left—the room which, having been evidently engaged by O'Donovan, I had no right to enter; or, remaining outside, should I act my gaoler's part, with the chance either of the priest's suddenly discovering the false position I was placed in, or of meeting the inquisitorial eyes of

strangers, who might suspect, and with reason, that I was doing something I was ashamed of? These were the questions which I asked myself; and, while waiting vainly for the answers, Fate, in the person of Father O'Donovan himself, took the decision out of my hands, and left me no choice but to obey the impulse of the moment.

He came out into the narrow passage, with his hat upon his head, and a long dark cloak flung over his shoulders; evident tokens, both of them, that the wearer was contemplating an exit which it behoved me if possible to prevent.

I have no doubt that I looked foolish enough when the priest, with a slight raising of his broad-brimmed hat, prepared to pass me by, and continue on his way: there was, however, no time to be lost, for if I were to obey Philip's orders, and be true to his cause, it was evident that I must act at once.

"Mr. O'Donovan," I said—I could think of nothing better, by way of commencement—"will you allow me the honour of a few minutes' conversation?"

"Another time," he said, hurriedly; "another time. I have an appointment of importance, for which," he added, looking at his watch, "I am, unfortunately, already late."

"I will not detain you a moment," I said; and devoutly did I hope that I might be enabled to keep my word. "And," I continued, edging myself round to the side nearest to the hotel entrance, for I was anxious to gain time, "I think when you have heard what I have to say, you will feel that your time has not been thrown away."

He looked very sulky, but, as I fancied, not at all suspicious of any ulterior projects, although the sudden entrance and exit of Philip Gascoigne must, I should imagine, have both surprised and mystified him.

"It is very annoying," he half-muttered to himself, as he reopened the door of his room, and stepping back, motioned me to enter.

The full glare of the gas fell upon his countenance as we again took our places near the fire, and I noticed that his was even sallower than before, and his brow more dark and lowering.

"You are aware," I said, "of my life-long intimacy with Edward Fairholme, and can therefore well understand that his interests are dear to me—that I feel for his sorrows, and adopt his wrongs as my own?"

"Very probably," he replied, drily, and, as I thought, insolently; "but as I do not happen to

be similarly circumstanced with a person who has always shown himself an enemy to my creed and personally hostile to myself, you must excuse me if I do not *as yet* perceive the importance to *me* of this—this rather inconvenient delay."

His tone was so insulting that it threw me off my guard.

"Mr. O'Donovan," I exclaimed, "this is too much, and you oblige me (by your assumed ignorance of the past) to remind you of the more than probability that Mr. Fairholme had no secrets from me—none, at least, in which you are concerned—and that all the dark details of events which took place at Westfield prior to Mrs. Tremlett's death, are as well known to me as they are either to Edward or—or to yourself."

"You must permit me to entertain some doubts on that head," sneered the priest. "Mr. Fairholme was, at the time you allude to, in a very singular condition of mind, which may have led him—quite unintentionally, of course—to give a wrong colouring to the events you allude to. They were veneered, probably, by his own—what shall I call them? and what is *your* name for dissenting fanaticism?—his own Methodistical and Calvinistic views on religious subjects. Really you must

excuse me, but the idea of the very natural occurrence of a lady professing the Catholic faith making a bequest in favour of that Church, giving rise to such an extraordinary amount of surprise and animadversion, does surprise—does, in short, provoke a smile, when I reflect upon such an instance of want of knowledge of the world, and of the common order of things."

"And," said I, indescribably provoked, "is it in the common order of things, that a young man, whom you found living happily and contentedly amongst his relations, should, so *soon* after he made your acquaintance, have become separated in heart and feeling from those he once loved and reverenced? Is it in the common order of things, that reason should have tottered on its throne beneath the baleful influence of one who, as God's anointed servant, should have spoken words of peace and healing, and have bid the brotherly love continue which he had found an inmate in that happy home?'

"You speak in riddles," said the priest; "and I cannot listen to you. I have neither time nor inclination to attend to such high-flown words; and——"

"But you have time to listen to one word of

grave announcement," I said, slowly, as I rose from my chair and faced him. "You have time to hear that Cyril Vernon is no longer in your power —time to hear that your victim is gone to appear in the presence of the Great Judge of all mankind, before whom you, too, will stand to give an account of your works."

I had kept my crowning intelligence to the end, nor was I disappointed in the effect which it produced; for a crimson flush spread over the priest's sallow face, which was succeeded by a deathlike paleness.

"Dead!" he exclaimed, while, as if mechanically, he made the sign of the cross. "Dead! and how is it that *you* come to me with this melancholy news? I left him well in health, and enjoying the peaceful seclusion of the Convent home which he had chosen."

"You left him in a prison, from which you had no fear that he would escape," I said, sternly. "But the intellect of that poor young man was not so wholly stultified but that he knew friends from foes, and could prefer, to the miseries of captivity, the free air of Heaven, and the liberty which God has given to us all. Man," I continued, almost fiercely, for my wrath grew as I called to mind

the terrible mischief he had wrought,—"Man! the hour of retribution has at last struck, and punishment will be dealt by the hands of those whom you have so basely injured."

He rose from his chair as I spoke, and tottering rather than walking towards the sideboard on which he had deposited his hat, he muttered some words about hurry and an appointment, and said that he was losing time; but before he could put his resolve into execution, I stood beside the door, and laid my grasp upon the handle.

"You shall not leave the room," I exclaimed; but even while I spoke, I half regretted my precipitancy, for I was his only warder, since any call for assistance in the capture of a priest would probably, when made by a stranger and a Protestant, have been worse than disregarded.

Seeing my indecision, O'Donovan began to recover his presence of mind, and was even commencing a kind of blustering menace, when the door opened from without, and, to my infinite relief, Gascoigne, followed by a couple of policemen, entered the room.

"There is your prisoner," he said calmly to the official who held the warrant; and the latter, after having informed the now trembling priest that he

stood charged with the offences of assault, embezzlement, and kidnapping, led the offender against the law unresisting and in silence from the apartment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RESTITUTION—LAST NOTES—EXEUNT OMNES.

SEVERAL months had passed away since the arrest of Father O'Donovan, and no public trial had followed on an event which seemed prophetic of exposure and well-merited retribution. But although the blazoning forth to the world of the misdeeds of that scheming man was prevented by his own timely yielding to the pressure of circumstances, and to the salutary promptings of his legal advisers, yet retribution did come in the shape of a restitution on his part of the ill-gotten gains which he thought to have made safely *his*, or, rather, let us charitably hope, the property of the Church whose willing tool he was.

Westfield—pretty, smiling Westfield—became again the property of the Tremlett family; for proof of the iniquities practised by the priest were so irrefragable that he made no attempt to retain possession of that which he had obtained both by fraud

and violence. The death of poor Cyril had removed, in a great measure, the shield which dread of *his* condemnation had thrown over the man who had prompted him to evil. The poor fellow's last words, also, in the absence of any proof of his insanity, told alarmingly (when coupled with Fairholme's testimony) against Father O'Donovan; so, after a three weeks' imprisonment, the latter, yielding to the threats and remonstrances of the able men professionally employed by his opponents, surrendered unconditionally to the enemy; and, as I before said, restored all the possessions he had unlawfully acquired (including the misguided Mrs. Tremlett's letters to her *protégée*), into the hands of their legitimate owners.

What has since become of the principal actor in this sad drama I have not heard; but I can well believe that a spirit so restless and ambitious can never remain quiet, or cease from troubling, so long as strength remains, or mental energy to direct him in the grasping enterprizes in which his soul delights.

Of Oswald Tremlett I have little to say, save that he took triumphant possession of Westfield, and married (as I was informed, for I have not as yet had the good fortune to make her acquaintance) a lady well suited to share in the quiet routine of country life which Bertha's brother leads, and will

continue to lead, till he and his wife repose together in the old family vault at Westfallow. Mrs. Tremlett, I have been told, manifests decidedly Low Church tendencies, and has very seriously taken to task a young curate in the neighbouring town (namely, the Westfallow above mentioned) for the grave errors of preaching in a surplice, and allowing his beard and whiskers to grow beyond the regulation length allowed to ministers of the Gospel by those who share the busy lady's religious opinions.

There is every reason to hope that the castle and estates of Kilnagrastha will not be much longer withheld from their rightful owner; for Milady O'Shaughnessey is beginning to show signs and symptoms of departure, since the full time, aye and more, had arrived when the delivery of the property to Philip Gascoigne should have taken place.

He, like an excellent fellow as he is, did not disturb either the lady or her kinsfolk in the work of spoliation.

"She cannot take the old walls away," he used to say, "or the bog, and as to timber there isn't a stick worth cutting down. No, there is nothing but the rents for her to appropriate, and as the old man settled nothing on her, I don't grudge the

widow that small result of her picking and stealing."

So, for the present Lady O'Shaughnessey remains in her mountain fastness, while Philip Gascoigne, although the winter has come and gone, is still in the little Deenish Island, biding the time when his duties as an Irish landlord will entail upon him a still greater expenditure of time, watchfulness, and care.

"And how did you contrive to pass the hours through those three dreary winter months?" I asked of Edward Fairholme, as, one bright spring morning, we were lounging in the shrubberies of Okecliff.

"Very well, and without an hour of tedium," answered Edward; "and even Bertha, who had many a lonely hour to pass, never complained of dulness, or expressed a wish to leave Philip Gascoigne alone."

"How could *I*?" said a soft voice near us, which could only belong to Fairholme's wife, "how could I, when there was still hanging about him the shadow of that great grief which followed on poor Cyril's death?"

"But at last," said Edward, "he can acknowledge that all is for the best, and can trace the hand of a merciful Providence in the death of our poor lost Eva."

"She sent him such a touching message just before she died," said Bertha; "and it reached him safely, for a Protestant friend of her childhood was allowed to pay her one farewell visit as she lay upon her bed of death. 'Tell him,' she whispered, as she drew Mrs. Sandford's kind face down to hers, 'tell him I always loved him dearly, more than my soul, I fear, or I should not be dying for him now!'"

"Poor child!" I rejoined; "and to think that the image of her lost lover—of the man she would never again behold in life—must have haunted her fancy through those dreary months, must have stood between her and the altar at which she knelt, and——"

"Must have been kept cruelly and painfully alive," broke in Edward, "by the necessity which her religion enjoined of confessing to the priest every passing thought of the heretic, whose image in her heart of hearts was enthroned till that heart should cease to beat, and be laid to rest in the silence of the grave."

"It has been well for Philip," I said, after a pause, "that he has had so much to occupy his mind and attention; and it will be better still when the removal of Lady O'Shaughnessey, and her un-

principled relations, will still more enlarge his sphere of usefulness."

"And all that surrounds him in nature is so grand and so spirit-raising," said Edward. "The boundless ocean stretching wide before him, and——"

"The wild swans," broke in Bertha, eagerly—"the wild swans passing on their heavy wings over the dark lake, with the towering spray torn up by the gale tipping their white pinions, and the eagles, the two monster sea-birds, soaring in graceful dignity after their prey."

"They will have that grand country all to themselves soon, I suspect," said Edward, "if emigration continues at its present rate. The offer of homesteads in the Land of Promise (of *Fulfilment*, we will not venture to call it) is a temptation too great to be withstood by these soil-loving and vainly-struggling people. Read this," he added, taking a letter from his pocket-book; "it bears one more true testimony to the wrongs of a class, and the short-sighted policy, to use no harsher term, of landlords and their agents."

The letter which he handed to me was from a distressed Irish widow of excellent character, entreating my friend Fairholme's intercession with the landlord whose right to *eject*, though clearly indis-

putable, seemed about to be executed with harsh and undue severity.

"Sir," so the letter ran, "I feel indeed great reluctance, after your great kindness to me, in again venturing to address you, but I do not expect that I will ever again have occasion to trespass on you. In last year I put together all the means that I could collect to send my son to America, but hoping that he would not only repay me, but send, in addition, something substantial to assist me and my long young and helpless family. The unfortunate state of affairs in America prevents his sending me the promised assistance, and in consequence our landlord, Colonel ——, has served an ejectment for the rent due by me on the 1st November last. The Colonel is of course entitled to get his land or his rent; but my poor husband, Dominick Grady, having expended £35 in building a house, and £30 more in improving the land, the last request I make of the Colonel is that he would allow me to dispose of my interest in the little holding of land! 'Tis true, I have no lease nor legal title; but when my poor husband spent his money, his labour, and his time in converting a bleak, barren spot into a sightly holding, he trusted to the honour of the Colonel that

his family would not lose the fruit of his expenditure without equivalent remuneration. If, in your humanity, you submit my case to the Colonel, you will have the blessing of a widow and orphans, and their daily prayers to Heaven for your long life, health, and every happiness that the world can give you and yours, ever will be the prayer of

"Your obedient, humble servant,

"MARGARET GRADY."

"And were you successful in your mediation?" I asked, as Fairholme restored the letter to its place.

"Not in the slightest of all possible degrees," was his reply. "However, the widow was spared (by a little aid which I collected for her) the miseries as well as the bitter mortification attendant on ejectment, and she, with her 'long weak family,' are, I trust, by this time, safely housed in an uncleared Lot in the Western States. Hard lines, I grant, but not so hard as the 'tender mercies' of that too often least pitying of subordinate tyrants, yclept an Irish agent."

During the following summer the little "Humming Bird" was again to be seen *wetting* her light wings on that coast which Sam Slick has so aptly

denominated "juicy;" while I, her only owner now, made still sadder notes on the desolate land, (the "emerald gem of the western world"), ere long, and almost without a metaphor, to be "set in the crown of the stranger."

For the young men and maidens, the health and strength and sinews of the land, are flocking fast from poor old Ireland's shores; while still the hard-worked, moody priest toils on; and still, flourishing on his well paid tithes, the congregationless "parson" goes on his way rejoicing!

Early in the mild autumn time twin sons were born at Okecliff, and when they were yet but two months old, Edward Fairholme and his family migrated from their comfortable English home to the rainy clime, and amongst the unloving hearts (at least towards those of their race) which beat in the breasts of the much-tried Connaught peasantry.

"There is plenty of money, comparatively speaking," said Edward, "spent amongst the poor in this prosperous Devonshire parish, whereas, *there* the wolf, as we had foretold, is more than knocking at the door, and those of their own race and country keep aloof, and come not to their aid."

So Bertha with her boys went with him to that barren region, far from her own land, and from her

many English friends; whilst from the forsaken Sister Island the "great ships sail outward and return," and over the billowy swell of the broad restless sea the banished children of the soil they loved, wave to the friends they hope to meet again—their "silent Welcomes and Farewells."

THE END.

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